

them on their devotion to the martyrs, and rejoices that "the sturdy root of their faith, famous from the earliest days, still survives and bears fruit unto our Lord Jesus Christ." He, and such as he, cannot "attain unto the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul," who taught them in person, and wrote to them instructions which they would do well to study. He offers many words of exhortation, more especially relating to the qualifications of widows, deacons, and presbyters. He warns them against those who deny that Christ has come in the flesh, against those who reject the testimony of the Cross, against those who say there is no resurrection or judgment. He sets before them for imitation the example "not only of the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also of others of their own Church, and Paul himself, and the other apostles," who have gone to their rest. There is, however, one cause for sorrow. Valens, a presbyter, and his wife have brought scandal on the gospel by their avarice. From all participation in their crime Polycarp exonerates the great body of the Church. He trusts the offenders will be truly penitent: and he counsels the Philippians to treat them, not as enemies, but as erring members. They are well versed in the Scriptures and will not need to be reminded how the duty of gentleness and forbearance is enforced therein. With this notice the Philippian Church may be said to pass out of sight. From the time of Polycarp its name is very rarely mentioned; and scarcely a single fact is recorded which throws light on its internal condition. Here and there the name of a bishop appears in connection with the records of an ecclesiastical council. On one occasion its prelate subscribes a decree as vicegerent of the metropolitan of Thessalonica. But though the see is said to exist in the present day, the city itself has long been a wilderness. Of its destruction or decay no record is left; and among its ruins travellers have hitherto failed to find any Christian remains. Of the Church which stood foremost among all the apostolic communities in faith and love, it may be literally said that not one stone stands upon another. Its whole career is a signal monument of the inscrutable counsels of God. Born into the world with the brightest promise, the Church of Philippi has lived without a history and perished without a memorial. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*)

3. Its characteristics. Its members were chiefly Gentile. There is not a single Old Testament quotation or allusion in the Epistle addressed to it. It is exposed to persecution from without, and there are tendencies on the part of a few to disunion within, but there is much calm and joyful service. The apostle finds little to reprove and much in the warmest terms to commend. It is perhaps quite justifiable to institute a comparison between this European Church of Philippi and the Asiatic Church of Thyatira. The first convert, Lydia, at once suggests this. We may regard her as in some respects the actual founder of both. We know that at Philippi her house became the centre of Christian influences, and when, therefore, she returned to her own home in Thyatira, she would certainly not be less active and zealous there than she had been in the city of her casual or occasional abode. In the circle of her friends, and probably these were many, for her position seems to have been one of affluence and influence, she would be a loyal witness for Christ. The truth thus proclaimed by a woman's lips, and illustrated and enforced by a woman's life, could not fail to leave its deep and abiding impress upon the Christian communities of both these heathen cities. And so, indeed, we find it to have been. The love and faith exhibited in ministering works which in our risen and glorified Lord's message to the angel of the Church of Thyatira receive their due award of praise, these are equally prominent, indeed more so, in Philippi. The Philippian Church on three separate occasions sent subsidies to relieve Paul's necessities. We may therefore be warranted in tracing the character as well as the origin of these two Churches to the one source—the impress of an ardent and organizing female influence, an impress visible in the benevolent forms which their faith so readily assumed. (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*)

The Philippian Church was eminently free from errors of doctrine and irregularities

of practice. No schism seems to have divided it ; no heresies had crept into its faith ; no false teachers had perverted its allegiance. One fault alone seems to have needed correction, and this was of so personal and limited a character that, instead of denouncing it, Paul only needs to hint at it gently and with affectionate entreaty. This was a want of unity between some of its female members, especially Euodia and Syntyche, whom Paul begs to become reconciled to each other, and whose feud, and any partisanship which it may have entailed, he tacitly and considerably rebukes by the constant iteration of the word "all" to those whom he can only regard as one united body. In fact, we may say that disunion and despondency were the main dangers to which they were exposed ; hence "all" and "rejoice" are the two leading words and thoughts. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*)

IV. THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.—1. Its occasion. It arose directly out of one of the few happy incidents which diversified the dreary uncertainties of St. Paul's captivity. This was the visit of Epaphroditus, a leading presbyter of the Church of Philippi, with the fourth contribution by which that loving and generous Church had ministered to his necessities. At Rome St. Paul was unable with his fettered hands to work for his livelihood, and it is possible that he found no opening for his special trade. One would have thought that the Roman Christians were sufficiently numerous and wealthy to render it an easy matter to supply his necessities ; but the unaccountable indifference which seems to have marked their relations to him, and of which he complains both in this and in his later imprisonment, shows that much could not be hoped from their affection, and strangely belied the zealous respect with which they had come thirty or forty miles to greet him. It is of course possible that they may have been willing to help him, but that he declined an assistance respecting which he was sensitively careful. But the Philippians knew and valued the privilege which had been accorded them by their father in Christ by helping him in his need. It was the custom throughout the Empire to alleviate by friendly presents the hard lot of prisoners, and we may be sure that when once the Philippians had heard of his condition, friends like Lydia and other converts, who had means to spare, would seize the earliest opportunity to add to his comforts. Epaphroditus, flinging himself into the service of the gospel, had succumbed to the unhealthiness of the season, and been prostrated by an all but fatal sickness. The news of this illness had reached Philippi, and caused great solicitude (ch. ii. 26). Paul had many trials to bear, and the death of his "brother" would have plunged him in yet deeper distress. We cannot doubt that he pleaded with God for his sick friend, and God had mercy upon him. Epaphroditus recovered ; and deeply as Paul in his loneliness and discouragement would have rejoiced to keep him at his side, he yielded, with his usual unselfishness, to the yearning of Epaphroditus for his home and of the Philippians for their absent pastor. He therefore sent him back, and with him the letter in which he expressed his thankfulness for that constant affection which had so greatly cheered his heart. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) 2. Its date and place. The indications of these are unusually clear. It is written "in bonds" (ch. i. 7-13) ; in the *Prætorium* (i. 13) ; it sends greeting from the "saints in Cæsar's household" (iv. 21) ; it expresses an expectation of some crisis in his imprisonment (i. 20-26) ; and a confident hope of revisiting Philippi (i. 26, ii. 24). All these indications place it in the Roman imprisonment of St. Paul, which we know to have lasted without trial or release for "two whole years," and which certainly began about A.D. 61. The date therefore must be fixed about the year A.D. 62 or 63. (*Bp. Barry.*) 3. Its genuineness. (1) External evidence. This is very strong. In all the ancient catalogues from the Muratorian (A.D. 170), in all ancient versions it is placed amongst the undoubted Epistles of St. Paul. In the Christian writings before the end of the second century,

knowledge of it may be distinctly traced; after that time it is quoted continually. Thus, in the Apostolic Fathers, to say nothing of slighter indications, Polycarp, in his Epistle to the Philippians, expressly declares its Pauline authorship and quotes from it, as does the "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs" dating early in the second century. Perhaps the earliest direct quotation of it is in the Epistles of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne (A.D. 177), where we find the great passage, "He being in the form of God," &c. Then, as in other cases, the habit of quotation begins in Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian, and continues afterwards unbroken. (2) Internal evidence. This rises almost to demonstration. The strong marks of personality which we trace in every line, the unstudied frequency of historical allusion and of undesigned coincidences with historical records, the simple and natural occasion of writing, in the reception of the offerings and the illness of Epaphroditus, the absence of all formal doctrine or ecclesiastical purpose, the fulness and warmth of personal affection—all are unmistakable marks of genuineness, and are inconceivable on the supposition of forgery. The character of St. Paul, as unconsciously drawn in it, is unquestionably the same character which lives and glows in the Corinthian and Galatian Epistles; and yet there is in it an indescribable growth into greater calmness and gentleness which corresponds remarkably with advance of age and change of circumstances. There are also marked similarities both of style and expression with the earlier Epistles, and that mingling of identity and development of idea which is notable in all the Epistles of the captivity. It is therefore not surprising that even in the freest speculation of the higher criticism there are but few examples of scepticism as to the genuineness of this Epistle. (*Ibid.*) 4. Its character. It is not a trumpet-note of defiance, like the Epistle to the Galatians. It is not the reply to a number of questions, like the First to the Corinthians. It is not a treatise of theology, like the Epistle to the Romans. It has more of a personal character, like the Second Epistle to the Corinthians; but it is poured forth, not to those towards whom he had little cause for gratitude and much need for forbearance—not to jealous critics and bitter opponents—but to the favourite converts of his ministry, to the dearest children of his love. It is a genuine and simple letter—the warm, spontaneous, loving effusion of a heart which could express itself with unreserved affection to a most kind and a most beloved Church. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) 5. Its relation to the gospel. It may be taken to exhibit the normal type of the apostle's teaching when not determined and limited by individual circumstances, and thus to present the essential substance of the gospel. Dogmatic forms are the buttresses or scaffold-poles of the building, not the building itself. But in the reaction against the excess of dogma there is a tendency to lay the whole stress of the gospel on its ethical precepts. For instance, men will assume and even avow that its kernel is contained in the Sermon on the Mount. This conception may seem healthy in its impulse and practical in its aim, but it is dangerous to morality; for when the sources are cut off the stream will cease to flow. Certainly this is not St. Paul's idea of the gospel as it appears in this Epistle. If we would learn what he held to be its essence, we must ask ourselves what is the significance of such phrases as "I desire you in the heart of Jesus Christ," "For me to live is Christ," "That I may know the power of His resurrection," "I have all strength in Christ who giveth me power." Though the gospel is capable of doctrinal exposition, and is eminently fertile in moral results, yet its substance is neither a doctrinal system nor an ethical code, but a Person and a Life. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) 6. Its analysis. I. The first section (original letter?). 1. Introduction. (1) Salvation (i. 1-2). (2) Thanksgiving for their fellowship in the work of the gospel, specially shown towards himself (3-8). (3) Prayer for their fuller knowledge and increase of fruitfulness to the end (9-11). 2. Declaration of the position at Rome. (1) The progress of the gospel through his bonds. Stimulating preaching of the gospel, partly in good will, partly in strife,

but in any case a cause of joy (12-18). (2) His own division of feeling, between a desire to depart and a willingness to remain for their sakes, which he knows will be realized (19-26). 3. Exhortation. (1) To steadfast boldness under persecution (27-30). (2) To unity of spirit in the humility and self-sacrifice of the mind of Christ Jesus (ii. 1-4). 4. The doctrine of Christ. (1) His humility in the Incarnation (5-7). (2) His humility in the Passion (8). (3) His exaltation (9-11). 5. Original conclusion of the Epistle. (1) Final exhortation to obedience, quietness, purity, joy with him in sacrifice (12-18). (2) Mission and commendation of Timotheus as St. Paul's forerunner (19-24). (3) Mission and commendation of Epaphroditus (25-30). (4) Final "farewell in the Lord" (iii. 1). II. The second section (postscript?). 1. Practical warnings—(1) Against Judaism, by the example of his own renunciation of all Jewish privileges (2-10). (2) Against claim of perfection, again enforced by his own example (11-16). (3) Against Antinomian profligacy, as unworthy of the "citizens of heaven" (17-21). 2. Exhortations renewed—(1) To unity (iv. 1-3). (2) To joy, thankfulness, and peace (4-7). (3) To following of all good in the fulness in which he had taught it (8-9). 3. Acknowledgment of offerings. (1) Rejoicing in their renewed care for him (10-14). (2) Remembrance of their former liberality (15-17). (3) Thanks and blessing (18-20). 4. Concluding salutation and blessing. (*Ep. Barry.*)

V. THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE EPISTLE.—This Epistle is not only the noblest reflection of St. Paul's personal character and spiritual illumination, his large sympathies, his womanly tenderness, his delicate courtesy, his frank independence, his entire devotion to his Master's service; but as a monument of the power of the gospel it yields in importance to none of the apostolic writings. Scarcely thirty years have passed since one Jesus was crucified as a malefactor in a remote province of the empire; scarcely ten since one Paul, a Jew of Tarsus, first told at Philippi the story of His cruel death; and what is the result? Imagine one, to whom the name of Christ had been hitherto a name only, led by circumstances to study this touching picture of the relations between St. Paul, his fellow labourers, his converts; and pausing to ask himself what unseen power had produced these marvellous results. Stronger than any associations of time or place, of race or profession, stronger than the instinctive sympathies of common interest or the natural ties of blood relationship, a mysterious bond unites St. Paul, Epaphroditus, the Philippian converts; them to the apostle, and him to them, and each to the other. In this threefold cord of love the strands are so intertwined and knotted together, that the writer cannot conceive of them as disentangled. The joy of one must be the joy of all; the sorrow of one the sorrow of all. The apostle's language furnishes the reply to such a questioner. This unseen power is the "power of Christ's resurrection." This mutual love is diffused from the heart of Jesus Christ, beating with His impulses and living by His life. When the contemporary heathen remarked how "these Christians loved one another," he felt that he was confronted by an unsolved enigma. The power which wrought the miracle was hidden from him. It was no new commandment indeed, for it appealed to the oldest and truest impulses of the human heart. And yet it was a new commandment; for in Christ's life and death and resurrection it had found not only an example and a sanction, but a power, a vitality, wholly unfelt and unknown before. To all ages of the Church—to our own especially—this Epistle reads a great lesson. While we are expending our strength on theological definitions or ecclesiastical rules, it recalls us from these distractions to the very heart and centre of the gospel—the life of Christ, and the life in Christ. Here is the meeting-point of all our differences, the healing of all our feuds, the true life alike of individuals and Churches. (*Ep. Lightfoot.*)

THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

PHILIPPIANS.

CHAPTER I.

Vers. 1-3. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi.—*Paul's greeting to the Philippians*:—1. Servants of Jesus Christ is the most royal title which human beings can assume. 2. Saints take precedence of bishops and deacons forasmuch as character is immortal, while office is but temporary. 3. All blessing is with the absolute; even the chief of the apostles can only bless ministerially, not primarily. I. **THE POWER OF MEMORY.** Remembrance is a very heaven or hell. Memory follows man like his own shadow. A man of gladsome recollections can never be absolutely alone. Whenever the apostle took an excursion across the mountains and through the valleys of his gone lifetime he caught sight of the loving Philippians, and their very names gladdened him—as a long-absent traveller might be gladdened by the pinnacles of the city of his home. II. **MAN SERVES GOD BY AIDING GOD'S SERVANTS.** Paul thanked God for the blessing of kind, helpful men. III. **THE MORE ENLARGED AND SUSCEPTIBLE THE HEART, THE MORE EASILY CAN SERVICE BE RENDERED TO IT.** It is easier to win the benediction of a great and noble heart than of a withered and sapless bone. Look at Elisha and the woman of Shunem; see Christ blessing the woman for her one box of nard; and Paul prostrating himself before God at the little kindnesses of the Philippians. IV. **HOW GOOD A THING IT IS TO SERVE THE GREAT, AND INFERENTIALLY, HOW SUBLIME A THING TO LIVE AND DIE IN THE SERVICE OF THE GREATEST.** If Paul remembered these benefactions, he has also left this testimony: "God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith and labour of love." In both cases it is a question of memory. Nor will God forget the man who never does a good deed. V. **EACH OF US SHOULD LEAVE A MEMORY THAT SHALL BE OHERISHED AND BLESSED.** A noble life is not necessarily made up of great efforts, but of little acts of consideration, well-timed smiles of encouragement, gentle words and generous interpretations. Not one of us, how hidden and feeble soever, need live a sterile life. VI. **EVERY MAN MUST DETERMINE FOR HIMSELF THE MEMORY HE LEAVES BEHIND HIM;** whether he will so live that "every remembrance" of him shall induce thankfulness to God, or his name be a burden which memory would willingly cast off. VII. **PAUL STANDS FORTH AS AN ILLUSTRIOUS MAN WHILE THE PHILIPPIANS ARE NOT KNOWN TO US BY MORE THAN THEIR GENERAL NAME.** The hidden workers are not on that account to deem themselves useless. Where would the oak be but for invisible agents? (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The apostolic salutation* teaches—I. **WHAT WE OUGHT TO BE.** Servants of Jesus Christ; saints; useful in His Church. II. **WHAT WE NEED.** Grace; peace. III. **WHENCE THESE BLESSINGS FLOW.** From God: from Jesus Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The blessings of the gospel*:—I. **THEIR NATURE.** II. **THE SOURCE** from whence they are derived. III. **THE CHANNELS** by which they are dispensed. IV. **THE END** for which they are given. That we may be holy, useful. (*Ibid.*) *Address and salutation*:—I. **THE AUTHOR.** 1. Paul had full confidence in the love and obedience of the Philippians. Hence, as in Thessalonians, he drops the official title, because he knew that no such assertion of his claim to be heard and obeyed was needed.

2. He introduces the name of Timothy as his dear friend, well known to the Philippians. This was natural, but was only a courtesy. The letter is Paul's alone, and carries with it full apostolic authority. When Timothy is referred to again it is in the third person (chap. ii. 10). 3. The designation, "servants," &c., is a beautiful one. James, the Lord's brother, similarly begins his letter. It describes all who, by taking Christ as their Master, have entered into true freedom. II. THE CHURCH. 1. Saints. (1) This is a most instructive paraphrase for "Church." The radical thought is consecration. Believers are by their Saviour's grace separated from the world to serve God. Our secular life Christ would have us make holy. We are apt to think of a Christian as one who accepts certain doctrines and performs certain services. The only satisfying proof that the gospel has been believed is holiness of character. (2) The secret of true saintliness—"in Christ Jesus." Out of Christ none are saints. Believers, because they are "in Him," have within them the pulsations and working of His life. (3) All the saints are addressed to show the warmth of the apostle's affection, his impartiality, and his desire that all should love one another. 2. Bishops and deacons. These are mentioned probably because—(1) Paul wished to acknowledge their liberality through Epaphroditus; or—(2) To support their authority, which may have been impugned; or—(3) In reply to a letter subscribed by them, as in Acts xv. 22-23.

III. THE PRAYER. The highest form of Christian life is seen when energetic love is fully pervaded by a spirit of gentleness and sympathy, exhibiting itself in true politeness to all of all social positions, and in little things as well as great. Paul's letters, written in the midst of arduous work, yet show diligent attention to all the kindly courtesies of social life. 1. From "grace," the free favour of God, come all our blessings. Its reference here is to the manifestation of the Divine favour in the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost. Grace to transform the naturally sinful into the likeness of the sinless Jesus is what is asked of God. 2. The meet companion of grace is peace, springing from the knowledge of God's love in Christ. An Eastern, when he enters a house, says, "Peace be to this house," as thoughtlessly as we say, "Good morning"; but the courtesies of Christians should have reality of significance. 3. The prayer is presented to God our Father, "from whom cometh every good gift," and the Lord Jesus Christ who humbled Himself that, in a way consistent with the glory of the Divine character, "grace and peace" might be bestowed on man. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*)

The salutation.—I. ST. PAUL, THE WRITER. 1. He omits his apostolical authority. The term apostle is not added here nor in Thessalonians and Philemon. His dignity as their father in Christ was supreme and incontestable. The man rather than the apostle speaks in every sentence. The spirit of his apostolical prerogative is felt all the more because of the absence of its letter. 2. He unites his own name with that of Timothy, whose name appears with his for a fourth time, because—(1) Timothy had twice visited the Philippians (Acts xvi. xix.), and was doubtless endeared to them. (2) Paul desired to invest him with as much dignity as possible. (3) He was probably St. Paul's amanuensis, and—(4) perhaps he was so dear to his father in the gospel. 3. The bond between them was the common service of Christ Jesus. The apostolic name would not have been common. It was specific and unshared. "Servants" in a sense belongs to all who belong to Christ. But here the term has relation to Christ as Lord, who assigns to all and to each their sphere of duty. II. THE CHURCH OF THE PHILIPPIANS. 1. Its essential spiritual character. "All the saints," &c., is the most profound and sacred definition of the true Church which the New Testament contains. (1) "All" suggests the whole company of those who form the body of which Christ is the Head, the bond of union being the Holy Ghost common to both. As a spiritual Church on earth it is the communion of those who (Col. i. 2) are "faithful" as believers in Jesus, "saints" as set apart from the world, and "brethren" as united in the brotherhood of salvation. (2) "Saints in Christ Jesus" indicates—(a) That they are consecrated to God in Christ Jesus; redeemed from the curse of the law; no longer condemned with the world but accepted in the beloved. Hence they realize the ideal relation, a holy nation and a peculiar people. (b) That they are not with Him, following Him only, but "in Christ," in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the Holy Ghost and all His influences; full redemption and all its powers of life and sanctity. But all things in Him are ours. (c) All this being true we are furnished with a safeguard against a double error. There is a tendency to regard this word as synonymous with Christian people; but we must not suffer it to become merely a conventional official term.

On the other hand there are those who make it disparage the visible Church. But here "saints" mean those who are baptized into the visible community, and signifies not only that they are truly members of Christ, but that they profess to belong to Him. (3) Each individual. The glorious prerogative of the mystical fellowship of the body must be a personal possession. 2. Its outward organic form. (1) This is the earliest reference of St. Paul to ecclesiastical order. It marks out a city as containing one visible body, not necessarily always meeting in one place, but under one united government. (2) The apostle greets the Church with the Bishops and deacons as one. They are all on the same level in relation to the Divine benediction. It is a debasement of Christian language which makes the ministerial order the Church. (3) The spiritual and visible organization must ever be found in one. Neither the one nor the other without its counterpart is perfect "in the Lord." III. THE GREETING. 1. As an apostolic salutation it is peculiar to St. Paul. It is pronounced in the name of God. It is not even inspired man to bless his fellow. All benediction comes from God as all doxology goes back to Him. 2. But it is also an invocation of grace and peace upon the Christian Church. (1) The eternal love of God as it sends the Redeemer for man's salvation is grace. The fruit of this flowing through Christ is peace. (2) The invocation should be our petition. All the people who receive the benediction and hear the prayer must say Amen. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *Paul and Timothy* (A sermon to old and young):—In the text we have age and youth, autumn and spring, the golden eventide and the fair light of early days. We see—I. AGE AND YOUTH TOGETHER. Not separate, looking askance at each other, divided by incompatibilities or jealousies, but in union. The young often flee from the old; the old are often impatient with the young. The advantages of this union are obvious. 1. The old will contribute the wisdom of experience. 2. The young will quicken animation and hope. II. Though age and youth are together AGE TAKES PRECEDENCE OF YOUTH. Paul first. A principle of right settles all questions of priority. It is not beautiful because not right that youth should take precedence. There are many ways of taking virtual precedence. 1. Contradiction. 2. Impatience. 3. Neglect. III. Though age takes precedence of youth yet BOTH ARE ENGAGED IN COMMON SERVICE. "Servants," not Paul the master. See how one great relationship determines all minor conditions and attitudes. As between themselves Paul was father, renowned, senior; Timothy was son, obscure, junior; but as before Christ, the one Lord, they were both servants. The Alps are great mountains in themselves, but are less than pimples in relation to the world. The earth, a great globe in itself, is a speck of light to the nearest star. The important tradesman in a small town is lost in a great city. The right way to take our proper measure and to chasten our ambition is to look at the highest relationships of all. The great man dwindles into his proper proportions when he looks at the Creator; the mighty potentate as he looks at the King of kings; the philanthropist as he looks at the Saviour. The noisy rushing train seems to be going fast; let it look at the flying stars and be humble. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The saints at Philippi*:—Lessons taught by the commencement of the gospel here. 1. To secure the widest diffusion of the gospel, great centres should be the first places chosen for the concentration of its forces. 2. The gospel of universal adaptation has a world-wide mission (Rom. i. 15, 16). The three first converts embraced different nationalities, employments, social grades. They were Lydia, the Oriental trader; the Grecian female slave and soothsayer; the Roman "keeper of the prison." "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Christ has demolished all barriers to the exercise of Divine mercy. 3. The duty and privilege of Christian parents to consecrate their children and home to Christ (Acts xvi. 15, 33, 34, 40). 4. Civic distinctions, subordinated to Christ, will further the gospel and adorn the Christian name. Paul's Roman citizenship gained his freedom and silenced his enemies. 5. His chain connects the history of Rome and Philippi. 6. The Christian's spirit can defy "the inner prison" to suppress its praise or prayer (Acts xvi. 25). (*G. C. Ballard.*) *Philippi* was anciently called Krenides or the "Springs" on account of its numerous fountains in which the Gangitis has its sources. Philip (in 358 B.C.) enlarged the old town and fortified it, and named it after himself. After the famous battle Augustus conferred special honours upon it, and made it a Roman colony. A military settlement had been made in it, chiefly of the soldiers who had fought under Antony, so that it was a protecting

garrison on the confines of Macedonia. A *colonia* was a reproduction in miniature of the mother city. The Roman law ruled, and the Roman insignia were everywhere seen. The municipal affairs were managed by decemvirs or prætors, and its lands were free from taxation. It thus possessed a rank far above that of a *municipium* or a *civitas libera*, and was very different from a settlement (*ἀποικία*) founded by adventurers or emigrants. Highly favoured as Philippi had been, it was in need of help. Political franchise and Roman rites, Greek tastes and studies, wide and varied commerce, could not give it the requisite aid. It was sunk in a spiritual gloom, which needed a higher light than Italian jurisprudence or Hellenic culture could bring it. The spear and phalanx of Macedonia had been famous, and had carried conquest and civilization through a great portion of the eastern world; the sun of Greece had not wholly set, and epicurians and stoics still sought after wisdom; the sovereignty of Rome had secured peace in all her provinces, and her great roads not only served for the march of the soldier, but for the cortege of the trader; art and law, beauty and power, song and wealth, the statue and the drama, survived and were adored; but there was in many a heart a sense of want and powerlessness, an indefinite longing after some higher good and portion, a painless and restless agitation, which only he of Tarsus could soothe and satisfy, with his preaching the God-Man—the life and hope and centre of humanity. Many remains of antiquity, such as are supposed to belong to the forum and the palace, are on the site of Philippi. The Turks now call it Felibedjik. (*Professor Eadie.*) With the bishops and deacons.—As St. Paul addresses his Epistle to all the faithful at Philippi, especially distinguishing them from the bishops and deacons, it thus appears clear that his intention is that all true Christians, whatever may be their condition in the Church, should read his letters, in opposition to the presumption of those who deny them to the people. Believers, enjoy boldly the right which St. Paul has given you in his writings. Search and study them carefully. You are not less the people of God than were the Philippians. (*J. Daillé.*) *Order of God*:—The Philippians are reminded at the very outset that God is not the author of confusion, but of order. All are not ministers, though all are members of the Church of Christ. Let those who form the congregation duly recognize and receive the ministrations of those who are set over them in the Lord. Let them not forget discipline in privilege. If they are Christians they have still something to learn: they need pastors and teachers, even though they have but one Lord and Master. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Peace*:—The word in the original use of it means that which binds together. There thus lies in the very term a testimony to eternal truth, that man can be at peace only when all his varied interests are “bound by gold chains about the feet of God.” The multitude of the angelic host praising God at Jesus’ birth sang of “peace on earth.” The multitude of human worshippers at Jesus’ triumphal entry into the city of David sang responsive of “peace in heaven.” Peace, then, is the sign and seal of Christ’s kingdom, both in its state of patience here and in its state of glory hereafter. (*J. Hutchison, D.D.*) *Ministers servants of Christ*:—Dr. Parr, in his life of Archbishop Usher, relates that while that prelate was once preaching in the church at Covent Garden, a message arrived from the court that the king wished immediately to see him. He descended from the pulpit, listened to the command, and told the messenger that he was then, as he saw, employed in God’s business, but as soon as he had done, he would attend upon the king to understand his pleasure; and then continued his sermon. *Christian peace*:—Christian peace, the peace which Christ gives, the peace which He sheds abroad in the heart, is it aught else than such a glorified harmony—the expelling from man’s life of all that was causing disturbance there, all that was hindering him from chiming in with the music of heaven, all that would have made him a jarring and a dissonant note, left out from the great dance and minstrelsy of the spheres, in which now shall mingle for ever the consenting songs of redeemed men and elect angels? (*Archbishop Trench.*) *Peace*:—Peace is the opposite of passion, and of labour, toil, and effort. Peace is that state in which there are no desires madly demanding an impossible gratification; that state in which there is no misery, no remorse, no sting. (*F. W. Robertson.*) *Grace a continuity*:—The acts of breathing which I performed yesterday will not keep me alive to-day; I must continue to breathe afresh every moment, or animal life ceases. In like manner yesterday’s grace and spiritual strength must be renewed, and the Holy Spirit must continue to breathe on my soul, from moment to moment, in order to my enjoying the consolations, and to my working the works of God. (*Toplady.*) *Grace comes from God*:—As grace is at first from God, so it is continually from

Him, and is maintained by Him, as much as light in the atmosphere is all day long from the sun, as well as at first dawning, or at sun-rising. (*J. Edwards.*) *The honour of serving Christ* :—When the Spartan king advanced against the enemy, he had always with him some one that had been crowned in the public games of Greece. And they tell us that a Lacedæmonian, when large sums were offered him on condition that he would not enter the Olympic lists, refused them. Having with much difficulty thrown his antagonists in wrestling, one put this question to him, "Spartan, what will you get by this victory?" He answered with a smile, "I shall have the honour to fight foremost in the ranks of my prince." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 3-11. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.—*Retrospect and forecast* :—I. **THE RETROSPECT.** 1. Its subject—"fellowship of the gospel." (1) Their mutual delight in all that the gospel brings. The grace that saved the apostle was that which saved his converts. Having a common faith they had a bond of union. (2) Their co-operation in all attempts for the furtherance of the gospel. 2. The emotions it awakened. (1) A grateful recognition of its unbroken character. Never had a single jar arisen between them. This experience was exceptional with Paul as it is with ourselves. In looking over ten years of work we can see more than enough to prevent our review from being one of unmixed pleasure. This is essential to check pride. (2) Thankfulness to God, the source and sustainer of it. This also is exceptional. We thank God for good and earnest men, but can they thank God for our co-operation? II. **THE FORECAST.** It is founded on the same co-operation. 1. The apostle's confident hope in regard to their future. Confidence in character is of tardy growth, and is often disappointed. Paul's was based on two grounds. (1) Their character had not failed when it was severely tested. They had braved the ridicule and persecution of their heathen neighbours for ten years. (2) God, being who and what He is, would not fail. He would bring the work He had begun to completion; not, however, that men are passive instruments in His hands. 2. The staple of His prayer. It is a prayer for the growth of that which already exists in them; and one which implies their active co-operation in fulfilling the subject of His petitions; that their love may grow in knowledge and perception. 3. The remaining portion of the forecast refers to the fruits of which love, knowledge, and a powerful moral sense are the roots. (1) There is a quick choice of the best among good things (ver. 10). Not mental and spiritual epicurianism. (2) Frankness and transparency, and therefore purity. (3) Blamelessness, not causing offence to men; so living as to be acceptable to God. (4) Abundant and uninterrupted fruitfulness. (*J. J. Goadby.*) *Pleasant memories and bright hopes* :—The apostle's usual practice was to begin with thanksgiving. He delights to recognize good in those to whom he writes, even where there is much to reprove. In melancholy contrast stands the Epistle to the Galatians. In a Christian the natural outflow of gladness is in thanks to our Father in heaven. More distinctively Christian is it when the heart gives thanks for the good of others; but most of all when, as here, for the spiritual good of others. I. **AN EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE FOR THE PAST HISTORY OF THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH** (vers. 3-5). 1. Its object—"My God." The "my" well illustrates the broadening influence of Christianity; its tendency to slay the selfishness of the human heart. The wise believer knows that the widening of the range of blessing brings no diminution of individual blessing. 2. Its occasion. He had vividly before him "the kindness of their youth, the love of their espousals" to the Saviour. With this good beginning he knew that their history since had on the whole accorded. How rare in any age such a Church! How sweet to a pastor such a memory. 3. Its form. (1) When a minister sees God's blessing plainly resting on his work, his sense of gratitude impels him with peculiar power to prayer. This is the proper and healthful influence of gratitude to God for any gift. (2) Prayer offered with thankfulness will be distinguished by gladness. 4. Its ground. Every true Church is an association for advancing the gospel. (1) This fellowship was first and fundamentally with Christ. (2) In Him they had "fellowship in relation to the gospel" with each other. The advancement of each other's piety and peace and the extension of the gospel was an object of definite pursuit. (3) This fellowship was with all Christians—with their friend Paul for example. II. **THE EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE FOR AN ASSURED HOPE IN REGARD TO THE FUTURE.** 1. Every work of God is good, particularly His work of saving grace, which makes sinful men "good." Paul believed that the same grace would

bring the good work to completeness. God does not do things by halves. 2. Having this happy conviction Paul is confident that the good would be carried on "until the day of Jesus Christ"—the day of the resurrection when body as well as soul will be glorified. 3. But diligence, watchfulness, and prayer, is necessary "to make our calling and election sure." The perseverance of the saints is a perseverance in faith and holiness. (*R. Johnstone, L.L.B.*) *The true spirit of prayer*:—I. THANKSGIVING (ver. 3). II. PETITION (ver. 4). III. CONFIDENT FAITH (ver. 6). IV. CHRISTIAN CHARITY (vers. 7-8). V. INTERCESSION (vers. 9-10). VI. HOLY PURPOSE. VII. PRAISE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) Here are—I. PLEASANT MEMORIES. Inspiring gratitude, joy, prayer. II. CONFIDENT HOPES. The work is begun; must be continued; completed. III. LOVING FELLOWSHIP. In bonds; in the defence of the gospel; in the enjoyment of special grace. (*Ibid.*) *Blessed remembrance and joyful prayers*:—I. THE REMEMBRANCE. No one looked back with deeper solicitude on past labours than Paul. Memory plays an important part in secular, religious, and national life. It influences the present and casts its shadow on the future. 1. Look at the general religious aspect of the subject. The history of the Church is full of imperishable monuments of life and character. This history has created an enthusiasm which has resulted in acts of the highest importance and use. Some histories debase, this elevates; some depress, this strengthens. 2. Look at the particular religious history of this subject. The history of this Church was interwoven with the apostle's liveliest interest. He was the founder of it, and it developed virtues which excited his warmest admiration. So there are tender recollections of the work of grace clustering around every particular Church. If we, at any time, are cold or despondent, let us open the chronicles of the Churches of our early days, gather around us the warm hearts which cheered us then, and though dead they will speak to us words of life and encouragement. II. THE PRAYERS. We call prayer "the burden of a sigh, the falling of a tear." There is that in our life which lends sorrow to prayer. Much of this, however, is wrong—lamentation over pardoned sins, &c. We are under an obligation to approach the throne of grace with joy. 1. We may look at this in its general aspect. It arose from an absence of selfish desires, and absorption in the condition and want of others. Paul's heart was bound up with the interests of the Church. At Philippi there was everything to evoke spiritual joy. Paul, therefore, joyfully prayed for a larger blessing. Let us approach God with praise for the prosperity of the Church, and with prayer for its increase. 2. If we narrow our field of observation every Christian must feel thankful for his new heart. If the glory of creation, the goodness of providence, excites gratitude, much more this the chiefest of God's works. Let us suplicate its further perfection. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *Christian remembrances*:—I. INSPIRE GRATITUDE. II. PROVOKE PRAYER. III. AWAKEN JOY. IV. CEMENT FELLOWSHIP. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Happy memories* those—1. That are prompted by the Spirit of God. 2. That recall the past joy of harvest. 3. That cause to abide with us, fruit long since reaped. 4. That link us still in association with distant but kindred spirits. 5. That evoke perennial gratitude to God. 6. That enrich our own moral worth. They "shall be had in everlasting remembrance," whose life on earth gives birth to memories such as these. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *A cheerful prisoner*:—At midnight in the Philippian prison Paul and Silas sang praises to God. The same joyous spirit breathes through this Epistle. And yet now he was a prisoner at Rome. I. THE SORROW OF HIS IMPRISONMENT IS TEMPERED BY HIS THOUGHT OF GOD. 1. He recognizes God as his God. He knows that God has led him and redeemed him, and that nothing can separate him from His love (Psa. xxiii.; lxiii. 2). As it was with Paul and David, so it may be with us. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee." II. THE SORROW OF HIS SEPARATION FROM THE PHILIPPIANS IS LIGHTENED BY THOUGHT OF THEIR WELFARE. 1. He remembered them in his thanksgivings. (1) For their fellowship with each other in the gospel. (2) He had confidence in its continuance. 2. He remembered them in his supplications. (1) That their mutual affection, knowledge of truth, and spiritual perceptions might increase. (2) That they might be preserved pure and without offence to the day of Christ. (3) That they might be filled with the fruits of righteousness. Conclusion: Looking to God he felt thankful; thinking on what God had wrought by him, and praying for its perfection, he was happy. Here is the secret of ministerial joy. (*Family Churchman.*) *My God*:—I. BETWEEN GOD AND HIM THERE WAS A RECIPROCAL COMMUNITY OF—1. Being. 2. Love. 3. Sympathy. 4. Effort. Blessed consummation of life when myself, as the court of final

appeal, gives place to "my God." Then "He calls a worm His friend, He calls Himself my God." II. THE GROUND OF THIS RELATIONSHIP. 1. He is my Master, my Provider, my Redeemer, my Father, my Friend. "Whose I am and whom I serve." 2. Faith gathers up these long-forgotten links, and welds them into a golden chain, whereby the heart is consciously rebound to God. Appropriating faith commands the fulness of God's heart and the omnipotence of His hand. III. ITS EFFECT. Deeper than any mere channel of its communication, true gratitude has its spring in the immediate and responsive fellowship existing between the soul and God. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *The introduction to the Epistle*:—Masters of the art of elocution teach us that the business of the exordium is to gain the good will of those to whom we speak. In fact, as hatred, dislike, and indifference close the entrance to men's hearts, it is necessary when we desire to persuade them that first of all we should prepare their minds, and fill them with a prepossession in our favour, so that our arguments may be received into their understandings. To this end the apostle labours in vers. 1-12. (*J. Daillé.*)

Vers. 4-5. Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.—I. THE QUALITY OF THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER. 1. Prayer may be varied according to the spiritual mood of the suppliant. In some instances prayer may hardly rise beyond a mere duty; in other cases it may become the supreme joy of the heart. 2. The mood need not impair the sincerity. You may pursue the same journey through a thick and troubled atmosphere, as well as through the brightness and calm of the summer light; the path is the same, the goal is the same, the purpose is the same, yet in the one case the soul may sit as a bird with folded wings, and in the other it may be soaring and singing through the streaming glory. II. ITS OBJECT. Fellowship in the gospel I take to mean unanimity, entireness of accord, and I see no reason why the apostle himself should not be included in that fellowship. 1. The centralizing influence of God's redeeming and sanctifying idea. No agent, principle, doctrine, has done, or can do, so much in the education and consolidation of heart-power as the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul thanks God for their mutual accord, and this may exhaust the grammatical significance of his language; but the fact that he is joyfully thankful for this unanimity brings us into the presence of the sublime idea—2. That Christianity is the most influential of all heart-uniting forces. (1) Men who are one in Christ are united in the highest ranges of their nature. They are not one necessarily in the lower and temporary appetences of their manhood, but in the vitalities of their being. (2) Death cannot break the seal that binds the friendships of the good. (3) Distance cannot divide the sympathetic. Paul is in Rome; his friends are at Philippi; but in the great globe heart of the apostle Rome and Philippi are but different names of the same place. The union of the Church is guaranteed by the immortality of the principles on which it is founded. The moral is the immortal. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The joy of the faithful minister over the progress of the gospel*:—I. JOY ALWAYS. II. JOY IN EVERY PRAYER. III. JOY OVER ALL. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Pure joy*:—I. SPRINGS from Divine communication. II. SUCCEEDS a previous sorrow. III. IS SUPERIOR to human surroundings. IV. IS SUSTAINED by answered prayer. (*G. C. Ballard.*) *Intercession for others*:—I. AN EXALTED PRIVILEGE. II. A HOLY DUTY. III. A HAPPY EMPLOYMENT. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Present rewards of Christian work*:—I. WORK DONE creates grateful remembrances. II. GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCES create a zest for prayer. III. PRAYER deepens joy. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *Fellowship and progress*:—I. FELLOWSHIP. 1. The bond of union—Christ. The attraction was irresistible to all who had come near enough to feel the force of the magnet of Divine love. This power directed all faculties, possessions, desires, in the same course. As He had not lived for Himself neither did they. The result was brotherly union. As all the rivers flow to find one common rest in the sea, so their melted hearts ran into the one fellowship—the Church. Here they found protection from the chill of the world and the storm of persecution. Weak faith was strengthened; the timid heart emboldened; unity begat strength and numbers, and augmented influence. The communal life brought together a vast capital to be invested in the cause which was so dear to their own heart. 2. CONCERTED action. The Christian communities existed as much, if not more, for external labour as for internal edification. As no Christian lived to himself, the whole Church could not possibly confine its wealth of power and influence within its own circle. They lived one for another that all might live for the salvation of the world. The idea generally attached to a community is that it exists exclusively for the

benefit of its own order, but the Christian society is built on the principle of give in order to receive. The Christians at Philippi met for prayer and for general improvement, in order to give the light of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus to the world. 3. The transmission of moral influence is only possible through *sympathetic media*. The best cable chain would not convey an electric message any distance, but a small copper wire would do so round the globe. Divine truth must proceed from the heart of the Church, and be anointed with the unction of pure motives and tender sympathies, to accomplish its mission among men. The experimental expression of the truth is the most powerful and successful. II. **PERSEVERANCE**—"from the first day until now." The converts had not relapsed into idolatry, nor were any idolatrous practices incorporated in their worship. They had resisted all worldly influences. The converts held on their way, progressing in knowledge and the Christian graces. When the apostle looked towards this Church, he saw signs of growth and increased vigour. 1. True Christian fellowship absorbs the whole man, thought, desire, association, and progression. It is the family of God, with ample room for the development of human nature. Of all fruitfulness, true manhood is the greatest. The consummation of fellowship is found in the man Christ Jesus. 2. Christian fellowship absorbs all time and service. From the first day to the last, and from the last day on through eternity its bonds are unrelaxed. It is not a temporary engagement, but an everlasting covenant. Some of its forms must undergo changes, but its essence is the same, even fellowship with the Father and the Son, and communion with the saints. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) Our fellowship in the gospel:—I. HOW ORIGINATED. II. WHAT IT IMPLIES. III. WHAT IT REQUIRES. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) True gospel fellowship:—1. Lives which adorn it. 2. Hearts which beat for it. 3. Lips which testify for it. 4. Hands which work for it. 5. Gifts which extend it. (*G. G. Ballard.*) Paul's activity and prayerfulness:—While his life was one of unexampled activity, it was also one of continual prayerfulness. These two aspects of his life are mutually explanatory. His activity was unwearied, just because his prayerfulness was unceasing. His religion was a life, and the heart of that life was prayer. The risen and exalted Saviour's words uttered regarding him at his conversion held good ever afterwards: "Behold, he prayeth." "As a good soldier of Jesus Christ," he had all-prayer as the weapon of his warfare. (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*)

Ver. 6. "Being confident of this very thing."—*Spiritual culture*:—I. THE SIGNS WHEREBY WE MAY KNOW GOD HAS BEGUN THIS GRACIOUS WORK. 1. The signs are not to be sought in any set methods or patterns by which God is supposed to begin His work of training the soul for Himself. His ways are endless. Some souls have to be smitten: for others a gentle look is enough, *e.g.*, Saul and Zacchæus. 2. There are certain impressions and effects produced by the preaching of the gospel or by the ways of God in His providence which are sometimes mistaken for signs of a gracious work. The consequences of sin may fill the conscience with remorse, and vows made to begin a new life. A sense of happiness springs up in emotional natures on a very superficial acquaintance with religion and its responsibilities. Nor is the sign found in a head well informed. 3. What then is the sign? Love to God, Christ, man, showing itself in trust and obedience, and goodness. II. THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THIS GOOD WORK WILL BE PERFECTED BY GOD. 1. Remember that so long as you are in this world the work is incomplete. For the development of a soul in Christ's likeness time is necessary. "First the blade," &c. Some are discouraged because they cannot see the full corn at once. If it is time for the full corn, however, do not be satisfied with the ear or blade. It is the indolent man who thinks he has only to believe once for all. 2. You must concur in God's work as it advances from stage to stage till it is completed in the day of Jesus Christ. Growth proceeds slowly if it is to endure. Mushrooms spring up in the night but they soon decay. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) Paul's confidence was—I. TOTALLY ISOLATED FROM JUDAISM AND SELF (Philip. iii. 3-7). II. GROUNDED SOLELY IN CHRIST. 1. As his medium of access to the mind, the heart, the power of God (Eph. iii. 12). 2. As the repository of all his interests (2 Tim. i. 12). 3. As being united to Him by love-bonds which neither the mere incidents of life, nor satanic power could sever (Rom. viii. 38, 39). III. A MEANS OF PERPETUATING LIVING RELATIONS BETWEEN HIM AND THE CHURCHES which he had formed. He expresses his confidence—1. In the sympathy of the Corinthians (2 Cor. i. 14, 15; ii. 3). 2. In the steadfastness of the Galatians in Christianity (Gal. v. 10). 3. In the obedience of the Thessalonians to his teaching (2 Thess. iii. 4). 4. In the

purity and intelligence of the Romans (Rom. xv. 14). 5. In the final perfectness of the Philippians. IV. THE SEED HE LIVED TO DISSEMINATE AMONG MEN. (G. G. Ballard.)

Confidence and completion.—I. OF WHAT WAS PAUL CONFIDENT? 1. That the work of salvation in this people would be perfected. They were running a race, and he was confident that they would receive the prize. They were the workmanship of the Divine redeeming hand; Paul was confident that the work would not be forsaken by the Workman. That God would perfect this work. "It is God that worketh in you." Paul knew that his own influence was nothing, except as it was the medium and the vehicle of the influence of God. 3. That the work would be finished in the day of the Lord. In that day every work will be tried as by fire. God's work in this people would appear then to be perfected. A sublime persuasion, this! To stand on some moorland and see some young oaks planted, and feel quite confident that they would grow to perfection; to visit a dockyard slip, and to see the timbers of the keel of a first-rate man-of-war laid down, and to feel confident that she would answer every trial of her strength, until she had rendered full service to the nation; to be present at some important public undertaking, and to feel sure that it would be noble, and prosperous, and of national benefit; to hear the birth cry of a human being, and to feel confident that its path from the cradle to the sepulchre would be that shining brighter and brighter unto perfect day, are all glorious positions; but they cannot be compared, so far as true greatness and moral grandeur are concerned, with the position of Paul here. The sublimity of this persuasion is largely connected with the love of Paul's heart. The multitude are thoughtless, indifferent, and careless about each other, or they are envious and malicious. But this is true, sincere, pure Christian love, which writes, "Being confident of this very thing." II. ON WHAT DID PAUL'S CONFIDENCE REST? 1. On the character and resources of the Worker. It does not rest on the Church. Not because Church polity is all right, because you are thoroughly orthodox, nor because your modes of worship are just what they ought to be. The foundation of his confidence was God in Christ. Men fail in work by loss of means and of power, by change of purpose, by their dependence upon others, and by reason of death. But it is not thus with the Creator. 2. On the nature and quality of the work about which he is assured. The work is remedial to the creature, and supremely honourable to the redeeming God. 3. On the fact that the commencement of this work was by God Himself. The beginning is the pledge of the consummation. Even a wise man does nothing at random. 4. On the fact that a day is fixed for exhibiting this work in all its completeness. The day of Christ, without redemption, would indeed be a dark day. 5. He happens to blend with all this his own experience of the faithfulness and wealth of the redeeming God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. III. HOW DID THIS CONFIDENCE OPERATE ON PAUL? 1. It did not prevent Paul praying for these people. 2. It gave fervency and gladness to his intercessions. 3. It did not keep Paul from exhorting the people and directing them to the use of means. Conclusion: Cherish such confidence concerning yourselves and each other, but be devoutly careful not to abuse it. (S. Martin.)

Divine workmanship.—I. ITS HIGHEST SPHERE—man (Eph. ii. 10). II. ITS CHOSEN INSTRUMENTALITY—holy men (1 Cor. iv. 9). III. ITS MODEL—Divine perfectness (Matt. v. 48). IV. ITS LAW OF ACCOMPLISHMENT—gradual but certain progression—"begun, perform." V. ITS GUARANTEE OF COMPLETION—God's will. His willingness is—1. Revealed in His word. 2. Embodied in Christ the Foundation. 3. Ratified by experience. 4. Plighted to us in the earnest of the Spirit. (G. G. Ballard.) "A good work".—I. THE GOOD WORK. 1. Its nature. A new creation (Eph. ii. 10), without which we have neither will nor power to perform good works (Phil. ii. 13). 2. Its property. It is a good work because—(1) It is begun by a good God (Psa. xxv. 8). (2) It is wrought out for a good purpose (Col. i. 12). (3) It is performed with a good end in view (Rom. viii. 30; Heb. xii. 14). II. THE GROUNDS OF PAUL'S CONFIDENCE THAT THIS GOOD WORK WOULD BE COMPLETED. 1. The perfections of God's works (Deut. xxxii. 4) in creation, providence, and grace. 2. The atonement of Christ (John x. 15). 3. The Christian's union to Christ (John xiv. 19). 4. The earnest of the Spirit (2 Cor. i. 22). 5. The nature of the life Christ gives (John x. 28). 6. The intercession of Christ (Heb. vii. 29; John xi. 42, xvii. 24). (S. Barnard.) *The good work within*.—I. A GRACIOUS OPERATION. 1. It is good. Why? Because—(1) God the best of beings is the author of it. He is the author of the wisdom that designed it; the influence which begins, continues, and completes it; the holiness which is its pattern; the love which it displays; the means whereby it is performed. (2) Its

effects are good. (a) In respect of the soul that is the subject of it, which passes from death unto life, from sin to holiness, &c. (b) In respect to families. When this good work is begun in the hearts of parents religion with all its pleasantness and peace dwells in the house, and God commands His blessing. (c) Upon ministers, who thereby are made not ashamed of the gospel. (d) Upon the Church, whose increase and prosperity is the edification and comfort of individual believers. (e) To the world. Every convert exercises, like salt, a purifying and preserving influence. (f) On heaven itself (Luke xv. 10). (3) Its end and completion are good. The soul is born for glory. 2. It is a work. (1) It is primarily and chiefly the operation of the Holy Spirit. He removes all obstacles from the heart, and gives the truth free course over the inner man. (2) It is begun and carried on by means of the Word, which is the power of God unto salvation. (3) All the faculties of the soul which is the subject of it are brought into lively and diligent exercise: serious thought, anxious inquiry, restless desire, fervent prayer, repentance, faith, love. II. ITS IMPORTANT SITUATION—"in you." Not only in the head but in the heart. 1. It is evident that it is an inward work from the many figures which denote it—temple; inner man; good seed. 2. How does it exist then? (1) As light in the mind. (2) As love shed abroad in the heart. (3) As peace in the conscience. Conclusion: 1. This inward religion will be evidenced by corresponding fruits without. 2. You in whom this good work is be thankful, for "by the grace of God you are what you are." Be anxious, watchful, prayerful, too, that it may go on. 3. You in whom it is begun, but fear that it is not, compare what your feelings and desires are with what they were. 4. You who think it is within you, but whose life proves that it is not fear, and tremble. 5. You who show no desire for it—if there is not a good work in you, there is an evil work there, evil in its origin, effects, end. Contemplate your danger. (*Congregational Remembrancer*.) I. A WONDERFUL FACT. "He who began the work." 1. The work is Divine. No part of God's work bears so distinctly the signs of divinity (James i. 18). Human agency is the channel. 2. The work is gracious. Wisdom is here and power, but goodness is a special feature. God's compassion in the gospel is a power to make us good. To make men wise, rich, happy, healthy, is a great work—but to make them good is better (2 Thess. ii. 16-17). 3. The work is progressive. The stages of spiritual life are like those of physical life advancing towards manhood. II. A GLORIOUS CERTAINTY. 1. The resources of God are inexhaustible (Isa. xlv. 9-10). 2. The faithfulness of God is unailing (Hos. ii. 20). 3. Perfection is God's end in everything. (*Weekly Pulpit*.) Whether this good work relates entirely to the special act of beneficence which had called forth this Epistle may be fairly disputed. Taken upon this narrow ground the apostle's joy would be but the refinement of selfishness. Rather he lays down a great principle respecting the Divine method of working, viz., to begin is to finish, and that principle, wide enough to encompass the universe, will also comprehend every detail of Christian service. I. GOD WORKS BY A PLAN—to prepare manhood for the final day—a period of time, or a perfection of development; the "day" of death, of judgment, or of the completeness of Christian manhood. II. GOD IS NOT FICKLE IN THE PROSECUTION OF HIS PURPOSES. He begins not that He may conduct an experiment, but that He may perform a design. III. GOD HAS SO REVEALED HIMSELF in the education of the individual and the training of society AS TO JUSTIFY THE MOST EMPHATIC EXPRESSION OF "CONFIDENCE" ON THE PART OF HIS CHURCH. The past fortells the future. When the world was young it needed Elijahs, Ezeekiels, and Daniels; but the richer the world becomes in history the louder and sweeter will be its tone of confidence. God cannot publish any amended edition of Himself. You may therefore make the past the source of the widest inferences. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The perseverance of the saints* :—The passage suggests—I. THAT REAL RELIGION IS A WORK UPON THE HEART. 1. In opposition to the mere profession of orthodox sentiments and opinions. The truth may be held in unrighteousness. Christ is not only set forth a propitiation before His people, but is made unto them "wisdom," &c. The gospel must be received as well as believed. 2. In opposition to a bare attendance upon the prescribed duties of religion. This will indeed follow but only as a means, not as an end. II. THAT THIS WORK IS A GOOD WORK. 1. It has respect to the immortal soul. 2. It qualifies for fellowship with God the chief good. 3. It is productive of good fruits. 4. Its fruition is glory. III. THAT IT IS THE PROVINCE OF GOD TO BEGIN THIS WORK. Every other cause is inadequate. IV. THAT WHEREVER GOD BEGINS A WORK OF GRACE HE WILL CARRY IT ON AND PERFECT IT. 1. He cannot be at a loss to accomplish the work He has commenced. As it is

not more difficult to create than to uphold, so it is as easy for Him to communicate great supplies of grace as it was to bestow it at the first. 2. To suppose otherwise would be altogether inconsistent with His purposes of grace and love. 3. But God will perfect His work by the use of means. (1) Secret prayer. (2) Perusal of His Word. Hence perseverance is not only a privilege but a duty. V. THAT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST IS THE PERIOD WHEN THE WORK OF GRACE SHALL BE PERFECTED AND PUBLICLY RECOGNIZED. (*Congregational Remembrancer.*) *Sanctification and perseverance*.—Sanctification, unlike the act of justification, is a work of the Holy Spirit, which will not be completed till the soul is perfected in glory. It is the gradual transformation of the renovated but imperfect heart continued until this corruptible shall put on incorruption. I. THIS WORK CONSISTS IN—1. A gradual purification of our nature. Regeneration is the first act, but by mournful experience Paul knew, and we know, that the remains of depravity are left behind. These it is the work of sanctification to remove. (1) It clarifies the sight of believers, enabling them more distinctly to discern Divine things. (2) It purges the conscience, causing it to pronounce more correctly on the relations of the conduct to the law and to the gospel. (3) It brings to light the lines of the Divine image already engraven on the heart. 2. A correspondent purification of our lives so that our obedience gradually approaches nearer the standard of holiness (Eph. ii. 10). (1) Evil propensities are diminished. (2) The graces produced by regeneration are strengthened: Faith, humility, love. II. THE MOTIVES WHICH SHOULD INDUCE US TO SEEK THIS SANCTIFICATION. 1. God commands it. 2. The love of Christ urges it. 3. We can only be prepared for glory by it. 4. It alone will enable us to glorify God. (*J. Foot, D.D.*) *The day of Jesus Christ*.—Man has his day; Christ shall have His. When—1. His toil and suffering shall be remunerated. 2. His government be vindicated. 3. His glory be revealed. 4. All men be brought into closest relations with Him. 5. His kingship receive universal recognition on whose head are many crowns. That day is—(1) The goal of the human race. (2) The terminus of history. (3) The fulness of time. For it Paul longed, watched, waited, lived. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *The present dispensation*.—I. EXCELLETH IN GLORY the former. II. IS INCOMPLETE in its results as yet. III. IS OULMINATIVE to a higher and final glory. IV. IS RICH IN SPIRITUAL FORCES. V. IS ONE IN WHICH DIVINE OPERATIONS FOR MAN'S WELFARE ARE ALL PERVASIVE. VI. IS MARVELLOUS IN ITS HISTORY. VII. IS ACCUMULATIVE in its events TOWARDS, and formative of, a FUTURE TIME. Former dispensations gradually opened the path of man from the guilt of Eden to the altar of atonement: this dispensation shall terminate in dissipating the shame of the cross by the glory of the Redeemer's kingdom. (*Ibid.*) *The danger and security of the Christian*.—The dangers which attend the spiritual life are of the most appalling character. The life of a Christian is a series of miracles. See a spark living in mid ocean, see a stone hanging in the air, see health blooming in a lazar-house, and the snow-white swan among rivers of filth, and you behold an image of the Christian life. The new nature is kept alive between the jaws of death, preserved by the power of God from instant destruction; by no power less than Divine could its existence be continued. When the instructed Christian sees his surroundings, he finds himself to be like a defenceless dove flying to her nest, while against her tens of thousands of arrows are levelled. The Christian life is like that dove's anxious flight, as it threads its way between the death-bearing shafts of the enemy, and by constant miracle escapes unhurt. The enlightened Christian sees himself to be like a traveller, standing on the narrow summit of a lofty ridge; on the right hand and on the left are gulfs unfathomable, yawning for his destruction; if it were not that by Divine grace his feet are made like hinds' feet, so that he is able to stand upon his high places, he would long ere this have fallen to his eternal destruction. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The faithfulness of God*.—Grandly did the old Scottish believer, of whom Dr. Brown tells us in his "Horæ Subsecivæ," respond to the challenge of her pastor regarding the ground of her confidence. "Janet," said the minister, "what would you say, if after all He has done for you, God should let you drop into hell?" "E'en's (even as) He likes," answered Janet. "If He does, He'll lose mair than I'll do." At first sight Janet's reply looks irreverent, if not something worse. As we contemplate it, however, its sublimity grows upon us. Like the Psalmist she could say, "I on Thy Word rely" (Psa. cxix. 114, metrical version). If His Word were broken, if His faithfulness should fail, if that foundation could be destroyed, truly He would lose more than His trusting child. (*Clerical Library.*) *The*

perfection of God's works:—Show me for once a world abandoned and thrown aside half formed; show me a universe cast off from the Great Potter's wheel, with the design in outline, the clay half hardened, and the form unshapely from incompleteness. Direct me, I pray you, to a star, a sun, a satellite—nay, I will challenge you on lower ground: point me out a plant, an emmet, a grain of dust that hath about it any semblance of incompleteness. All that man completes, let him polish as he may, when it is put under the microscope, is but roughly finished, because man has only reached a certain stage, and cannot get beyond it; it is perfection to his feeble optics, but it is not absolute perfection. But all God's works are finished with wondrous care; He as accurately fashions the dust of a butterfly's wing, as those mighty orbs that gladden the silent night. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The basis of Paul's confidence*:—He had one great historical instance to commend his theological inference. For he knew, with all the depth and intensity of a late and reluctant realization, that the whole history of his own people had been one vast illustration of the truth on which he relied. In them, far back, in the very childhood of the race, God had begun a good work: patriarchs, psalmists, prophets had by faith been confident that He would perform it: and He had actually performed it until the day of Jesus Christ, until His first coming. From the call of Abraham to the Incarnation one purpose had been steadfast, one work had moved on a line determined from the beginning—all that vast period, with its surprises and disasters, its restless shiftings, its immeasurable contrasts, had been spanned by one dominant conception—through all that seemed so disorderly and aimless there had sped the evolution of one supreme design—from first to last one thought held good, one will pressed on—and He who came at last could look back across the centuries to that majestic, solitary form upon the far-distant watch-tower, and could declare—"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it and was glad." (*J. Paget, D.D.*) *Means of progress in the Divine life*:—Man is not formed in his infancy, but passes through several stages which bring him gradually to perfection; one polishes his memory, another sharpens his mind; this strengthens his judgment, and that embellishes his manners; so is it with the work of piety. For this new man who must be brought to perfection, can only be so by various degrees. He has his infancy before he attains his riper years. As in the schools of painters they first draw the figures with the pencil, and then add the colouring, giving them at different sittings and with much labour the last gloss of perfection, which in the studies of those which they adorn steals the senses of the beholders; so in the school of God, the faithful are begun and the work sketched, and then they are polished and finished. Here this work is well begun; but it can only be finished in heaven. We are the pencil sketch of the work of God to which He daily adds some touch; but the last finishing stroke we shall not receive till the great day of the Lord. (*J. Daillé.*) *The perseverance of the saints does not supersede human effort*:—If any of you should be well assured that, in a certain line of business, you would make a vast sum of money, would that confidence lead you to refuse that business, would it lead you to lie in bed all day, or to desert your post altogether? No, the assurance that you would be diligent and would prosper would make you diligent. I will borrow a metaphor from the revelries of the season, such as Paul aforetime borrowed from the games of Greece—if any rider at the races should be confident that he was destined to win, would that make him slacken speed? Napoleon believed himself to be the child of destiny, did that freeze his energies? To show you that the certainty of a thing does not hinder a man from striving after it, but rather quickens him, I will give you an anecdote of myself: it happened to me when I was but a child of some ten years of age, or less. Mr. Richard Knill, of happy and glorious memory, an earnest worker for Christ, felt moved, I know not why, to take me on his knee, at my grandfather's house, and to utter words like these, which were treasured up by the family, and by myself especially, "This child," said he, "will preach the gospel, and he will preach it to the largest congregations of our times." I believed his prophecy, and my standing here to-day is partly occasioned by such belief. It did not hinder me in my diligence in seeking to educate myself because I believed I was destined to preach the gospel to large congregations; not at all, but the prophecy helped forward its own fulfilment; and I prayed, and sought, and strove, always having this Star of Bethlehem before me, that the day should come when I should preach the gospel. Even so the belief that we shall one day be perfect, never hinders any true believer from diligence, but is the highest possible incentive to make a man struggle with the corruptions

of the flesh, and seek to persevere according to God's promise. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The permanence and sacrificial character of the work of grace* :—These words, found linked together more than once in Pauline usage, *e.g.*, 2 Cor. viii. 6, Gal. iii. 3, have probably a sacrificial import. They are used in describing religious ceremonies, and especially the ritual of sacrifice. The metaphor then may be this: just as a sacrifice, when once it is solemnly inaugurated, is carried through with all the appropriate rites to its completion, so every work of grace in the believer's heart, being not only God's work, but a work which is an offering presented unto Him, will be carried on to its proper consummation. Nothing will be allowed to come in the way, so as to render it a half-finished, a mutilated, an imperfect thing. Begun, it must be "performed." Paul is now writing to a Christian community composed for the most part of those who had once been heathen; his language therefore purposely takes appropriate colouring from their former but now forsaken rites. There is, he would say, a sacrifice carried on within their souls, a work of grace, a work shown in Christian liberality, which God will not permit to remain mutilated and incomplete. This explanation is all the more probable in view of a similar figure found in ii. 17. There substantially the same metaphor appears distinctly on the surface, which at least lies only hidden here. It reminds us of the infinite solemnity belonging to every good work wrought within us and wrought by us. It is "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." But the apostle directs the thought forward to the final completion of this service, "until the day of Jesus Christ." (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*) *The day of Jesus Christ* :—That is the goal of our race. That is the point to which every Christian eye is directed. Every other day of our lives, every other day of the world's existence, is a day; a common, ordinary, casual day and no more: this is the day. It is sometimes so called without further epithet or explanation (1 Cor. iii. 13; Heb. x. 25). Do we remember, do we live in the remembrance of all that is involved in it? The day of Jesus Christ is the day which is His altogether; the day which shall reveal Him as He is, disclose His real greatness, put down every rival power, and erect His throne for ever as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Where shall we be then? Shall we be among those slothful and disobedient servants who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord? or rather among those who have been long waiting for Him with loins girt and lights burning, and to whom the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ will be also the day of their own final manifestation as the sons of God? (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Vers. 7-11.—I have you in my heart.—Aboundings of love:—I. Was it a slip of the pen when Paul wrote "I HAVE YOU IN MY HEART"? Will he modify it? No, he will make it more than it was. Lest it should be supposed that it was only his manner of speech, and that he is only uttering a passing sentiment, he puts before what he has to say a solemn asseveration. "God is my witness." Such a form of expression would hardly be regarded in these days as meeting the laws of taste and propriety, and some object to it on the ground that God cannot be called into court to witness to a thing, and that after all it is only the testimony of a man. Granted: Yet it is the highest form in which testimony can be given. And apart from the apostle's anxiety to be believed, there was a naturalness in his using it which would not belong to any other. He was often alone, separated from his converts, but he carried them about with him in his heart. He often spoke to God about them, so that God knew of his love to them. And not only so; it is as though he said, "Did I say I had you in my heart? I should rather have said, 'I long after you in the heart of Jesus Christ.' 'I love, yet not I, but Christ loveth in me.' His heart and mine meet in unison here." **II. LOVING THUS HOW NATURAL THAT HE SHOULD PRAY ABOUT THEIR LOVE.** He asks that the great love faculty should fill their souls. "In all knowledge." There is the knowledge of the schoolboy, of the well-informed man, of the philosopher. Here it is the latter, the higher knowledge, such as is strong meat to the strong man. "In all perception." The first term deals with the general knowledge of the gospel; this comes down to particulars of Christian apprehension, "That ye may approve things that are excellent" or "try things that differ." It is good to have the faculty for so discerning, that we may never call darkness light; but the apostle prays for more, even that in the region of things, all of which are good and true, they may discern the most excellent, always seeing and choosing the best. Again, there are different ways of doing good things. So that the apostle goes on to pray that they may be

"sincere and without offence" or "stumbling"—anything that prevents advance.

III. THE PRAYER IS SUMMED UP in the words: "that ye may be filled with the fruits of righteousness." In so doing they would have the sublime glory of living to the praise of God—the highest end and aim of being. Men living the Christian life by distinct intent and aim achieve the noblest thing in actual result. But a little thing does it seem? Every little stream contributes to the majestic swell of the ocean, so every fruitful life is sending its little to contribute to the fulness of the Divine glory.

IV. THE RELATION BETWEEN THE PHRASE, "THAT YOUR LOVE MAY ABOUND," AND ALL THAT COMES AFTER. That is the root-phrase, the key to the position, mother to all the virtues. Love will produce all these, and make a beautiful character. The soul is a living house having many doors. Some, the greatest number, stand by the door of reason, and strive to enter, and many go in. But when they get in they find the house full of company. How did they get in? By other doors, or by the windows. From deep convictions, blossoming hopes, and heavenly aspirings, but most got in by the door of love. This is not so imposing a way of entrance. There is no great knocker to this door called logic. You come in by it softly, you do but whisper, and are admitted.

V. THE PRACTICAL USE of all this is that we should take the best things we can think of to promote the aboundings of love. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) The sixth verse was like the peal of a trumpet; the seventh is the low sweet murmur of the summer morning. The expression of the text is of singular beauty. Who can measure the circumference of a truly philanthropic heart? Has arithmetic any cunning art by which to calculate the girth of that organ of affection? A man in Rome carrying the Philippian Church in his heart! I. HE WHO CARRIES THE WORLD ELSEWHERE THAN IN HIS HEART WILL SOON WISH TO CAST OFF HIS BURDEN. II. HE WHO CARRIES THE GOOD IN HIS HEART CAN NEVER BE DESOLATE. Loneliness is an impossibility to the well-stored heart. III. HE WHOSE HEART IS ENGAGED WITH THE TENDER OFFICES OF AFFECTION IS THE PROFOUNDTEST INTERPRETER AND THE MOST EFFICIENT SERVANT OF MANKIND. IV. HE WHO ENSHRINES HIS BENEFACTORS IN HIS HEART HAS BROKEN THE DOMINION OF SELFISHNESS. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

*Reasons for Paul's confidence:—*I. THE COMMON INTEREST—"defence and confirmation." 1. They sympathized with the apostle in his trials. These trials arose not out of political or moral offences, but out of his defence and propagation of the gospel. The Philippians made common cause with him, supporting him by gifts and prayer. The true character of Christianity is seen here. When the Jews are in sackcloth and ashes, Esther is pleading their cause; when Peter is in prison, the disciples are praying for his release. The Church is one in adversity as well as prosperity; one in prison as well as in heaven. Remember that as you think of missionaries, and your persecuted brethren in the home, workshop, &c. (*Heb. xiii. 3.*) 2. They seconded the apostle's efforts by their lives and labours. They lived the gospel he preached. Their sympathy was deeper than attachment to his person, or admiration of his character. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." "See how these Christians love one another," was the evidence wrung from minds full of animus. No power can shake the gospel when firmly rooted in the life of the Church. Sceptics may as well scoff at the light of the sun as ignore the gospel of the life and character. II. THE MUTUAL LOVE AND ESTEEM WHICH THIS SERVICE PRODUCES—"I have you in my heart;" as we say of a friend, "He has a warm place in my heart." 1. It was a great love. 2. Constant love. The old adage "out of sight, out of mind," was not true here. 3. Increasing love. Many streams dry up, but "let brotherly love continue." III. THE COMMON SOURCE OF BLESSEDNESS—"partakers with me," &c. 1. By the one sacrifice of Jesus they were saved from sin. There is but one fountain opened for sin. 2. The example of Jesus led them all in the right way. With one accord all believers "show forth the praises of Him who hath called them," &c. 3. His presence was their one source of inspiration. Daily communion with Jesus kept their zeal burning, and their work advancing. 4. His coming was their only hope. (*Weekly Pulpit.*)

Observe—I. WHAT A FAITHFUL MINISTER DELIGHTS TO THINK OF IN HIS FLOCK: That they will be—1. Steadfast. 2. Progressive. 3. Triumphant. II. WHY HE DELIGHTS TO THINK SO. Because—1. He loves them. 2. Labours for them. 3. Suffers for them. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

*The fellowship of the gospel:—*We have here a wider idea of that than in verse 5. The apostle and the Philippians being one in their faith in Christ, were one also in their love of each other. Being one with the apostle in Christ, they were one with him in all the vicissitudes of his experience. He refers to himself as in two different situations: in the one he was

bound as a prisoner, in the other he was defending and confirming the gospel. In each case the Philippians were partakers of his grace. I. THE ADVOCACY OF THE BEST OF CAUSES MAY BRING A MAN INTO SOCIAL HUMILIATION. II. SOCIAL HUMILIATION DOES NOT NECESSARILY INVOLVE MORAL DISHONOUR. III. WHILE THE MORALLY HONOURABLE ARE SUFFERING FROM SOCIAL HUMILIATION THEY WILL NOT BE ABANDONED BY THE PARTAKERS OF THE SAME GRACE. Another proof of the uniting and consolidating force of Christianity. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The unifying influence of Christian love*:—There are instincts in human nature by which we love the beautiful, the useful, the tender, and the loving; but this love drew its inspiration from character and from life. This is the result of the love of Christ in us. Two drops of rain fall on the same stone, and near each other. By the force of the affinity they will travel the short distance, and unite. Divine love comes down in drops, which attract each other to form the Christian Church. In the concerted action of that society, all intellects are fused into one wisdom; all consciences unite to make one great moral force: all hearts are joined, as so many embers gathered together to make a large fire; all wills are blended to create a power before which opposition must cease. As water will find its level, so the love of Christians will rise as high as its source. The Saviour loved the world, and died for it; so St. John says that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (*The Study.*) *The heart of Paul and the heart of Christ*:—As Bengel says, "Christ, not Paul, lived in Paul; wherefore Paul is moved not in the heart of Paul, but in the heart of Jesus Christ." Springing from such a depth, Paul's love could not but rise to vast proportions. The heart of Jesus, infinitely tender, thrown open to men, was the home of the captive apostle—the well-spring of sacrificing love; where man is brought nearest to God. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *The apologetic value of Paul's bonds*:—So then Paul's bonds were a confirmation of the gospel, and a defence. And most truly so. For if he had shunned bonds, he might have been thought a deceiver; but now by enduring everything, both bonds and affliction, he shows that he suffers this for no human reason, but for God, who rewards. For no one would have been willing to die, or to incur such great risks; no one would have chosen to come into collision with such an emperor, I mean, as Nero, unless he had looked to another far greater King. Truly a confirmation of the gospel were his bonds. See how he more than succeeded in turning all things to their opposite. For what they supposed to be a weakness and a detraction, that he calls a confirmation; and had not this taken place, there had been a weakness. (*Chrysostom.*) *Ministers carry the images of their people in their hearts*:—After the battle of Gettysburg, a soldier was found dead upon the field, holding in his hand the picture of three small children. No clue to his name could be found. In the terrors of battle he had comforted himself with this picture. It was published, and by this means the children were found in a village of Western New York. Even so do faithful ministers carry the souls of their converts with them wherever they go.

Ver. 8. God is my witness how greatly I long after you all.—*Paul's tender regard for the Philippians*:—I. ITS WITNESS—God. 1. This appeal should not be made frequently, or on trivial occasions; but should be reserved for seasons of peculiar solemnity, as here. Paul wanted to give them an assurance of his regard such as would be their consolation when he was gone. 2. But though the parade of this witness should be spared, the consciousness of it should pervade all our life. It is easy to deceive our fellow man. It is healthful to be constantly reminded of an onlooker who is not mocked. His company, however, is shunned by many for good reasons. No man chooses the living God as his habitual company who is not reconciled to him through Christ. 3. What a blessed state to be in; to let all our affections towards our brethren flow and reflow in the Divine presence. II. ITS SOURCE—"the bowels,"—the strong compassion of Christ. From that fountain his own pity flowed. 1. He was free to testify, "In me dwelleth no good thing." True; no pity flowed from his cruel heart or dimmed his cruel eye when Stephen died. He was not at that time in Christ. From the memory of his former self he writes Titus iii. 3. 2. Now the very love that glowed in the bosom of Jesus was communicated to His disciple. It was not a love of mere nature or an affection of party. 3. His new position gave him a new view and new affections. He had risen with Christ, and from the heavenly places the old divisions between Jew and Greek, &c., had disappeared, and one line only divided the race into two compartments, those who were in Christ Jesus and those who were not. He loved the whole, but rejoiced over the brethren with joy unspeakable. III. ITS CHARACTER

AND STRENGTH—"How greatly," &c. 1. Learn from the fact that he called God to witness it, that in order to get into communion with God it is not necessary to banish your brother out of sight. The law is that "he who loveth God, love his brother also." 2. The extent and distribution of his affection—"all." Probably they were not all alike attractive. The longing was one as it burned in Paul's heart; but it was many coloured as it streamed on a promiscuous congregation. Light is for all the same, but it becomes various as it falls on various surfaces. (1) Little children. "Longing after" is more appropriate to infants than to others. (2) The young who are of understanding age. You have need of a compassion like Christ's. (3) The burdened with care. (4) The aged. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*)

Brotherly love:—I. ITS SOURCES—"the tender mercies of Jesus Christ." Here the hardness of our hearts is melted. Sin has dried up the wells of sympathy, broken the family ties of mankind. Jesus collects the fragments, places them in the furnace of his love, and welds them together. 1. The restoration of the family likeness. When we see God the Father in each other, we begin to love one another. The spirit of Christ generates that love. When we meet in Christ we experience the first touch of heart. The ministry of the tender mercies of Christ quickens those who are dead in trespasses and sins. 2. On the basis of brotherly love human society is reconstructed. The branches touch each other in the vine. The whole fabric rests on the one corner stone, Christ. By the power of the Cross the clouds of selfishness are rolled back. The social instincts are sanctified to constitute universal society. II. ITS ATTESTATION—"God is my witness." The evidence was an inward consciousness, and an outward life. Omniscience was the final court of appeal. 1. Love to the Church is an evidence of our conversion by the truth (1 John iii. 14). 2. Through the Church we commune with God. The heavens declare God's glory, the earth His riches, the Bible His will, human experience in the Church His goodness. The historical side of religion administers to the spiritual. The wisdom of Paul, the zeal of Peter, the affection of John, bring God nearer to the heart. Every believer is a vessel of the Holy Ghost; and to drink of His experience is to commune with the Divine. III. THE FUNCTIONS OF SPIRITUAL LONGINGS. Paul's supreme desire was to be near the Philippians, and to be of service to their growth. Thereby he would witness—1. To the love of God. 2. Against the hatred of the sinful heart. 3. To the final society of the blest. (*Weekly Pulpit.*)

Apostolic solicitude:—I. ITS OBJECTS. II. OCCASION. III. PRINCIPLE. IV. INTENSITY. V. EVIDENCE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Saints longing for saints is a prophecy that all saints are destined to be brought into one assembly. God will satisfy all the desires which He creates; He will feed the soul which He has made hungry; and as He has given us the spirit of true fellowship, so will He supply the means of its full enjoyment. Out of all this comes heaven. The good longing for the good; the creature yearning for the Creator; the redeemed sighing for the Redeemer; the dew of the morning trembling with the hope of being taken up by the infinite light: what is all this but the premonition of celestial life. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

The consistency of love of man with love of God:—He is a jealous God to the effect of commanding, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me;" but even in His own sight you may cherish to the full all your love of the brethren. The sun, at his rising, extinguishes all the stars of heaven, but not the flowers of earth; so when you get into the presence of God, none other is permitted to stand on a level with Himself, but into His presence you may boldly bring all your brethren of human kind. In His presence you may keep every affection that is inherited by nature or ingrafted by grace. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*)

Universality of Christian love:—A lamp lighted on the top of a pillar casts light on some objects, and a shadow on others; but the sun spreads day over all. The love that is grafted into Christ is universal; like His own. There is no respect of persons with God; and none with the godly as far as they act in character. (*Ibid.*)

"The bowels of Jesus Christ":—The *σπλάγχνα* are properly the nobler viscera, the heart, lungs, liver, &c., as distinguished from the *έντερος*, the lower viscera, the intestines. The *σπλάγχνα* alone seem to be regarded by the Greeks as the seat of affections, whether anger, love, pity, or jealousy. (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

Vers. 9-11. And this I pray.—*The recorded prayers of St. Paul* are eight in number. I. FOR THE EPHESIANS (i. 17-23; iii. 14-21). II. FOR THE COLOSSIANS (i. 9-14). III. FOR THE THESSALONIANS (I. iii. 10-13; II. i. 11-12; ii. 16, 17; iii. 16). IV. FOR THE PHILIPPIANS (*in loco*). (*G. G. Ballard.*)

St. Paul's prayer for the Philippians:—These words contain a petition for—I. THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE AFFECTIONS BY THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE INTELLECTUAL POWERS. II. AN INCREASE OF LOVE IN KNOWLEDGE AND JUDGMENT WITH REFERENCE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MORAL CHARACTER. (*C. Lawson.*) The prayer tells us that love should be—I. PROGRESSIVE. II. INTELLIGENT. III. DISCRIMINATING. IV. SINCERE. V. WITHOUT OFFENCE. VI. CONSTANT. VII. FRUITFUL. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) I. THE APOSTLE'S ACTION OF PRAYING. The Philippians abounded in love, &c., yet the apostle prayed that they might abound yet more and more. Whence observe—1. The continual necessity of prayer. Whatsoever graces the Lord hath bestowed on us yet we have still need to pray that we may abound more and more in Him (1 Thess. v. 17; James i. 5; 1 Thess. iii. 12). And the reason why we are continually so to pray is plain; for—(1) Such is our weakness through sin, that unto whatsoever measure of grace we have attained, yet stand therein we cannot unless God uphold us (Matt. xiv. 31; Eph. vi. 20). (2) In whatsoever grace we abound, yet therein we come so short of perfection that we have need to pray that we abound more and more. (3) This, then, may serve to condemn our great slackness, negligence, coldness, and faintness, both in private and public prayer. 2. Christians are not to stand still, or be content with good beginnings, but to grow (Heb. vi. 1; Phil. iii. 12). And how should any man think otherwise, considering what enemies hinder our perfection. These continually bid us such battle, that if either we stand or give back we must generally take the foil. (1) Many which seemed to have begun in the spirit make an end in the flesh. (2) Others pause, and, as if they were in danger in every step, move not a foot forward. Nay, not to go forward is to go backward, and not to increase in the graces of God's Spirit is to decrease (Rev. iii. 16). (3) Others are content to make a show of going forward for advantage and gain. II. THE THINGS FOR WHICH HE PRAYS. 1. That their love to God and one another might abound. (1) Touching the love of God, how can we love Him enough who so loved us. (2) Love one of another (1 Thess. iii. 12). (3) Love towards poor saints and afflicted members of Christ (2 Cor. viii; Deut. xv. 7-11); which serveth to condemn the cold love of Christians in our days (1 John iv. 20). 2. That they may abound more and more in knowledge, viz., of God's will out of His Word (1 Cor. xiv. 20; Heb. vi. 1). This then may teach us—(1) To beware of their leaven who would have shut us up in ignorance, on the ground that it is the mother of devotion, and that the Scriptures are hard to be understood, and perilous to read. But what saith the Holy Ghost? (John v. 29; 2 Pet. iii. 18; Col. iii. 16.) (2) To give diligence unto the reading, hearing, and meditating upon the Scriptures that we may abound in knowledge and understanding. Very lamentable is it to see so many thousands who are as ignorant of God's Word as when they sat in the darkness of Egypt. 3. That they may abound more and more in all judgment, i.e., in sound judgment, that having their wits exercised through long custom, they may discern both good and evil; and abound also in an experience of spiritual things in themselves, that they might spiritually feel in their hearts that which they knew out of the word (Psa. xxxiv. 8). This should teach us to so observe the mercies and judgments of the Lord that we may have an experimental knowledge of them (Psa. xxxiv. 6). 4. That their "love" might be grounded in sound "knowledge and judgment," that each having help of other, and being furnished by other, they might the better "discern things that differ." Though we have all knowledge and not love we are nothing. So, on the other hand, though we have all love and no knowledge, it is nothing. Which of these soever grows up without other, like Jonah's gourd, will quickly wither. Our care then must be that our love abound in knowledge, that we may know on whom our love ought principally to be set; and in all judgment, that knowing whom we ought to love we may love them as we ought (Gal. vi. 10). Otherwise our love may do more harm than good; as zeal without knowledge. III. THE ENDS WHEREFORE HE PRAYS. 1. That they might discern things that differ one from another, virtue and vice, false and true prophets, corrupt and uncorrupt doctrine, and so might follow the good and fly the bad (Rom. ii. 18). Very justly, then, are they to be reproved that in seeking after knowledge even out of the Scriptures propose any other end. (1) Such are they that, seeing the Church to lean on the Scriptures, do by their corruptions of the text, their false glosses and conclusions, labour to overthrow the truth and to build their own errors. (2) Others there are whose end is only a vain ostentation, that men may think and speak of them as great rabbins (1 Cor. viii. 1). The end of others is information, so that they may not appear ignorant, but who show no fruits of their knowledge in a godly life. 2. That they might be pure from any leaven of corruption in doctrine, life, or manners as white wool never dyed, fine

flour never leavened. For it is not enough to know the difference between purity and impurity (1 Cor. v. 6-7; Matt. xvi. 12; 1 Tim. v. 22). 3. That they might not stumble, but hold on a constant course without falling, slipping back, or standing at a stay (Gal. iii. 3; Luke ix. 62). 4. That they might be fruitful in all good works. (1) The measure of good works—"filled;" pressed down, shaken together. (2) The definition of good works—"fruits of righteousness." (3) Their fountain—"Jesus Christ." (4) Their end—"the glory and praise of God." IV. OBSERVATIONS FOR OUR INSTRUCTION. 1. We are not only to do the things that are good, but to abound in them (Col. i. 9-10; John xv. 5-8; Acts ix. 36). Why? (1) That we may please God (Col. i. 10). (2) That we may glorify the Father (John xv. 8). (3) That we may abide in Christ, and Christ in us (John xv. 5). 2. Let this stir us up and forward to every good work. (*H. Aray, D.D.*) I. CHRISTIAN LOVE IN ITS PROPER GROWTH AND MANIFESTATION. 1. This love is not that specially which was cherished towards the apostle. From his point of view that was already much more than he had looked for. Nor is it brotherly love, or love to all men, or love towards God and Christ, or loving activity in Christian service. It is rather love in the absolute sense of the term—the inward state of the heart, which is also the motive power of the life. 2. It is no mere rhetorical accident which makes this grace the very essence of the renewed life. It is the life of the believer's soul, and the soul of his life. It is with conscious design, therefore, and perfect propriety, that he who penned 1 Cor. xiii. should here specify love as the distinctive mark of the life hid with Christ in God. 3. This love, although the bond of perfectness, is itself never perfect on earth. Here there must be a persistent going on to perfection. The manifold outgoings of love need direction and control. (1) It cannot live for ever in a cell, apart from thought (Prov. i. 4). We are therefore taught that the love of the renewed heart must live in the sphere of increasing spiritual knowledge. (a) Of Christ—a clear perception of the Saviour's person, character, and work, accompanied by a heart interest therein. (b) Of the deep things of God. (2) This abounding of love in knowledge is, consequently, also an abounding in all discernment, in every moral sense or feeling which almost intuitively perceives what is right, and almost unconsciously shrinks from what is wrong. It is spiritual discrimination, moral tact. 4. The function of love thus regulated is to approve the things that are excellent. Love has to prove and so approve things that differ (marg.) in being better. What are those excellent things? See chap. iv. 8-9. 5. A practical and much needed lesson lies in this. Love may set on foot many schemes of usefulness, and yet the issue may be failure, because the abounding love has not been in knowledge and discernment. It can never be right to cultivate one central grace to the neglect of the others. II. THE PERFECTION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE THEREBY ATTAINED. 1. "Sincere," *i.e.*, spotless, pure, clear. Some see here a military figure, the result of dividing an army into several sections, so as to separate the more hardy and valiant, as Gideon set apart his three hundred. According to this the word means selected and so excellent. Others see an agricultural figure. Select, pure as corn that is purged by the winnowing fan or threshing roller. But the view that it means tested or judged by the sunbeam is the most probable. Christ's people as here depicted, therefore, are like the gem held up to the sunlight, and found to be without a flaw; walking in the light of truth, and the white radiance of eternity. 2. It follows that they become in relation to others "void of offence," giving no occasion for stumbling. A Christian who is consistent in his own character is also inoffensive in his conduct. His unconscious example, as well as words and deeds, is a power only for good. 3. This he does unto the day of Christ. (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*) In one word the apostle prayed that the Philippians might grow. Moral dwarfs never pray that others may become moral giants. A man cannot transcend himself. Only the firmament can embrace the stars. The apostle prays—I. THAT LOVE MAY ABOUND IN MORAL TACT. True love is intelligent. We are to love God with "all our mind." As knowledge is the basis of faith, so is it the first condition of love. II. FOR AN ENLARGEMENT AND QUICKENING OF THE DISCRIMINATING FACULTY, that they might distinguish between things that differ, that so they might elect the right. A man is known by his verdicts. The artist sees where the clown but looks. The more we love Christ the more shall we be qualified to perceive every charm in moral life. He who approves the excellent will defend it. III. FOR THEIR SINCERITY. The word has a double meaning. 1. In the Greek it signifies that which is proved in the sunlight. Christians are to be so true that the solar light of infinite rectitude cannot find any stain or derangement in their character. 2. In the Latin it means "without wax;"

clarified honey, free from all admixture. The Christian life is to be so refined as to be thoroughly free from foreign elements. IV. "BEING FILLED," &c. (ver. 11). Paul, beginning at the centre, finds his way to the circumference; beginning with the spiritual, he culminates in the practical (John xv. 1-5). See the connection between Christ and fruit. This call to practical life shows that Christianity is not a mocking pretence, a theological dream, or a speculative science, but a sublime, vital, and vitalizing reality. The doctrines acknowledged in this prayer are—1. That Christian life is progressive. 2. That God is ready to co-operate with His people for their moral enrichment. 3. That the entire manhood is to bear fruit. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) Let it be your earnest concern and prayer—I. THAT YOUR LOVE MAY ABOUND IN ALL KNOWLEDGE AND JUDGMENT. 1. The love you should aspire after is Christian love. (1) Such as proceeds from faith (Gal. v. 6). (2) Which has for its objects God and Christ, His cause, truths, ordinances, servants, and your fellow creatures. (3) This is the fulfilling of the law, and inspires the soul with a cheerful disposition for and activity in keeping God's commandments (Rom. xiii. 10; 1 John v. 3). 2. Your being Church members supposes that you are already partakers of this love in some prevailing degree, as Paul inferred in this case. Persons lacking this ought not to be Church members; for love is the great band of union and communion. 3. The prayer intimates that it is not perfect, but that you ought to seek further progress in it. (1) There may be something lacking with respect to its disinterestedness, impartiality, and spirituality; or in respect to some instances and exercises of it; or in respect of its constancy, and the degrees of its fervour and activity. (2) Keep before you a humbling sense of defect, and be earnest with God to invigorate and develope it. 4. The text suggests that it should be a judicious love. Light should kindle all your warmth. Without knowledge and judgment your love will be like a land flood, that overfloweth with a rapid stream, but hath no springs to maintain it, or banks to conduct it to a regular course. Take heed of an ignorant, ungovernable, and misjudged love of you know not what, or why. II. THAT YE MAY APPROVE, &c. (ver. 10). We are to prove all things by the unerring touchstone of God's Word, and by a spiritual taste according to it. The more acquaintance we have with the things of God the better they recommend themselves to us (Psa. xxxiv. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 2-3). III. THAT YE MAY BE SINCERE, &c. (ver. 10). Some understand "sincere" as referring to God, and "without offence" as referring to man. But why should not each refer to both? 1. Sincerity is not so much a distinct grace as an essential quality running through all our graces and duties, distinguishing them from false appearances in their exercise towards God and man. 2. "Without offence" (Acts xxiv. 16). IV. "THAT YE MAY BE FILLED," &c. (ver. 11). 1. The nature of a man must be changed in its moral frame by regenerating grace before he can bear fruits of righteousness. 2. They are by Jesus Christ—(1) As all virtue for producing them is derived from Him (John xv. 5). (2) As all their acceptance with God is through Him (1 Pet. ii. 5). (3) As the revenue of glory which arises from them passes to God through Him (1 Pet. iv. 11). (*J. Guyse, D.D.*) *True Christian love*:—Our power to help and bless each other is primarily the power of prayer. Prayer directs and impels to services of love; secures the efficiency and success of all other ministrations; appeals to the foundation of good, and fills the channel of blessing sometimes to overflowing. And Paul knowing all this writes not merely, "I preach, teach, warn, labour," but "I pray." He prays in harmony with the words of the Lord Jesus that they may abound "more and more" in love. Some people seem to have enough religion, and very little that enough is. Paul's cry was ever for "more"—if he had light, if he felt himself unusually strong, if he felt his inner life enriched from God's fulness, his cry still was "more." So he prayed—not that the Philippians were marrow-minded, thin-souled, cold-hearted people. I. THERE WAS LOVE IN THE HEARTS OF THE SAINTS AT PHILIPPI. This was the chief evidence of their being saints. The absence of this, no matter what had been present, would have cast a cloud on their Christian profession. II. THIS LOVE WAS MANIFESTED. It was not stagnant like the waters of a tarn, but flowed as a stream which, descending from the hills, runs through the valleys. Christian benevolence must not sleep in the depths of your nature. What if God's pity had slept in His! If it be there then make ways for it, so that the living water may reach a thirsty world. III. THE LOVE OF OTHERS MAY BE AFFECTED BY OUR PRAYERS. Sometimes no other agency will succeed, as in the case of a crabbed professing Christian who is impervious to speech, example, and other acts of loving-kindness. We can pray that God would expand that narrow soul. IV. THE LOVE OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN IS NOT A STATIONARY

PRINCIPLE : because life underlies it. (*S. Martin.*) *Love—the heart's eye* :—Love is a faculty of spiritual knowledge. Metaphysicians think the faculty of sight is to be found principally among the intellectual powers. As a power of sight Paul says five things about love. I. It **DISCERNs SPIRITUALLY**, *i.e.*, it sees those objects which belong to the spiritual sphere. Love sees as no other faculty can—1. The truths of the gospel. 2. God Himself. 3. The precepts of the Saviour. 4. The promises. 5. Christian duty and responsibility. II. It **DISCRIMINATES**. Some people say that love is blind, which is true in a sense. But love has also widely open eyes. It separates right from wrong views of God, of human character, of Christian duty. Prejudice never discriminates, nor pride, vanity, cowardice, pugnacity, ambition. III. It **APPRECIATES**. Dislike and hatred depreciate; indifference values nothing; love approves what is excellent. You will see what is excellent in others in the degree of your love. If you have not Christian love you will fail to see much that is Christian in God's Church. IV. It **PREVENTS MISTAKES**. It makes a man sincere and without offence. The sincere but unloving are sometimes most offensive. The deficient in love are often most insincere. The two things in social and Church life are often separated. You have the sincere and the loving as separate classes. But why should they not be brought together? The Christian is not obtrusive, obstinate, exacting, compromising. V. It **REMAINS UNIMPAIRED TO THE END**. The understanding may fail, and the memory, but love never. A beautiful illustration of this we sometimes see in old Christians. Conclusion : The day of Christ comes apace. In the fires of that day love only will survive. (*Ibid.*) *Perseverance to the day of Christ* :—The "day" governs the whole petition. Let us mark the ascending order and cumulative force of the supplications—1. For the steady increase of their love in the knowledge of truth and in the moral tact of its appreciation; 2. For their perfection internal and external of moral character; and —3. For their final acceptance thus perfected in the testing day of Christ. I. **THE REGULATING PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN LIFE**. 1. The Philippians had been already taught of God to love Himself and one another. The apostle now prays for its abundant increase, not by arbitrary and absolute effusion into their hearts, but as the result of being fed by Divine truth and diligently practised. 2. "Knowledge" is the apprehension or arrangement of truth in the mind, but spiritual knowledge, partly as being bound up with our spiritual nature and needs, and chiefly as being imparted by the Holy Ghost. (1) As love enlarges and strengthens the power of attaining religious knowledge, so increasing knowledge feeds love in return. (2) All knowledge is summed up in knowing Christ. All truth is now "as the truth is in Jesus." 3. Judgment is the faculty of spiritual discernment : that moral sensitiveness of the renewed mind which is quick to perceive the good and evil in every doctrine, practice, and contingency of daily life (Heb. v. 14). As knowledge is truth stored up in the mind, so judgment is the mind itself applying that knowledge to the endless occasions which arise for distinguishing between what should be sought and what shunned. 4. The approval of things that are excellent is the operation of this knowledge and discrimination in the mind itself—the precious insight of love which, using its knowledge and its tact, distinguishes in every case what is more excellent and at once approves of it. It is the inward legislator that often tells us what is the commandment where outward legislation fails. The praise of charity in 1 Cor. xiii. is little more than the praise of its marvellous discrimination. Almost all that can look like, without being, religion is there condemned by the judge among the graces. II. From the regulating principle the prayer now passes to **THE PERFECT CHARACTER**, as established in the world, under the guidance and control of enlightened love. Paul exhibits the whole compass of godliness under two aspects, inward and outward—first in their separation and then in their union. 1. Sincere signifies that flawless simplicity of heart which is able to endure every test. The last and most perfect test is the eye of God. What the sun is in nature **h** Great Detector is in religious life. Those whom God sees thus pure in heart have it as the reward of their purity that they see God. This sacred simplicity is a pearl of great price. Hence it is made a matter of prayer; such cleanness is the express creation of God; but not so as to exclude the consecration of our own effort and habitual watchfulness. 2. "Without offence." The prayer asks for preservation through the blessing of God on the wise solicitude of charity, from doing anything that should hinder the salvation of any one. The Christian's thoughtful charity must show its tact in this that his conduct shall at once rebuke the sin of others, and direct them to the beauty of holiness. 3. When the prayer proceeds to the "fruit of righteousness" it completes the picture of this

perfection, at the same time that it explains more fully the meaning of "sincere and without offence." (1) Righteousness is neither that imputed nor that implanted alone, but that which comes through our union with Christ and unites in fruit. (2) The fruit or produce of the new method of making us right in Christ is the entire compass of godliness in all its tempers and acts. (3) "Filled," sounds out clearly the note of Christian perfection attainable because prayed for, prayed for because attainable. It leaves no room for the notion of any necessary defect in the religious life. III. We must go back to that central word, "THE DAY OF CHRIST," which COMPLETES THE MEANING OF THE PRAYER. Jesus the Judge will in that day acknowledge the purity which He now approves, and confirm and reward the righteousness He now creates. Christian integrity, sealed in one sense by death, is to be re-examined, and finally, with the whole universe as witness, ratified in the great day. Conclusion: Those who are tempted by their creed or indolence to rely on the supposed necessity that a salvation once begun must be finally accomplished are reminded by the tone and words of the prayer that without their inward and outward holiness that blessed issue shall not be attained. (W. B. Pope, D.D.)

Ver. 9. That your love abound yet more and more in all knowledge and in all judgment.—*Paul's prayer*:—I. ITS SUBJECT MATTER—"Your love." II. ITS BURDEN—"May abound," &c. III. ITS AIM—"That ye may approve," &c. (G. G. Ballard.) *Definiteness in prayer*:—1. Implies a deep consciousness of an intelligently apprehended need. 2. Is becoming when an intelligent being addresses the Divine Intelligence. 3. Is essential, from the very nature of prayer. 4. Affords a fixed ground for the exercise of faith. 5. Emboldens supplication. 6. Inspires hope of a definite response. (*Ibid.*) *Love*:—I. GOD'S LOVE, embraced by faith into the inmost personality of man, is the central force of Christian life. II. CHRISTIAN LOVE. 1. Receives its first impulse from God's love. 2. Is sustained in activity by its power. 3. Moves in a reflux orbit of increasing circles which continuously grow (Rom. v. 20). III. ABOUNDING LOVE. As the river, although perfect, perpetuates itself only by its ever-onward flow, as the full ocean at spring tide "aboundeth yet more and more," so love, in abounding, gathers that true freshness, vigour, and activity, whereby it has power to abound yet more and more (*Ibid.*) *Love's spring tides*:—1. Roll to us immediately from the heart of God. 2. Are in harmony with His reign of grace. 3. Bring to us the fullest manifestation of His love. 4. Thrill us with holy excitement though performing monotonous duties, and inspire a holy daring though in view of the fiery trial. 5. Overleap in their impetuous progress every landmark of stern propriety set up by cold conventionalism. 6. Know no limits save "knowledge and judgment" (*Ibid.*) *Love and knowledge*:—Such passages as these have a peculiar value for serious Christians; for one of the great questions of Christian life is, What is it best to pray for? Here Paul gives us a regulating principle for many of our own most earnest prayers. I. We see what St. Paul takes for granted as THE UNDERLYING SUBSTANCE, THE RAW MATERIAL OF THE DIVINE LIFE OF THE SOUL OF MAN—"Love." 1. He does not pray that their knowledge may abound more and more in love. Whenever knowledge and love are put in competition, the precedence is always given to love. As compared with knowledge love is intrinsically stronger, and worth more practically. To be knit to God by love is better than to speculate about Him. To enwrap other men in the flame of a passionate enthusiasm is better than to analyze rival systems of ethical, social, or political truth. 2. A personal affection for Jesus our Lord is the first step, the fundamental thing in real Christianity. What is it that provokes love? (1) Beauty, and our Lord's moral beauty acts upon the affections of a true soul just as the sun acts upon the petals of an unopened bud. (2) One specific kind of moral beauty—generosity. The generosity of Jesus in giving Himself to die for us appeals even more powerfully than the faultless beauty of His character. "The love of Christ constraineth us." (3) It is a distinct endowment, an infused grace, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. 3. To love Christ is to love (1) God; for God in Him is made apprehensible and approachable. (2) Man, in Him the representative. (3) Thus love to the Saviour is the common source of all that is not spiritual in religion, and most fruitful and creative in philanthropy. II. St. Paul would have this love ABOUND MORE AND MORE IN KNOWLEDGE—ἐν γινώσκεις—the higher knowledge. 1. There is a period in the growth of love when such knowledge is imperatively required. In its earliest stages the loving soul lives only in the warmth and light of its object. It asks no questions; it only loves. But

from the nature of the case this period comes to an end, not because love grows cold but because it becomes more exacting. It cannot live apart from thought, and sooner or later must come to an understanding with it. It must know something accurately about its object, and begins to ask questions which must be wisely and truly answered, or in its deep disappointment it will sicken and die. 2. How repeatedly this truth is realized in the case of the sons of deeply religious people, and in people who have been deeply religious themselves, but have passed from fervent love to deep despair, because its training in knowledge has been neglected. 3. This law will explain what happened in the Early Church. At first love reigned alone, unenquiring, ecstatic. But when the Gentiles pressed into the fold questions could not be but asked. And so in God's providence love had to, and did, grow more and more in knowledge. Each of the four groups of St. Paul's Epistles marks a distinct stage in the doctrinal insight of the Church. Each of the great Alexandrian teachers, Clement, Origen, Dionysius, Athanasius, and Cyril poured a flood of light upon the Christian conscience. The Church passed from the agonies of the Coliseum and the catacombs to define, and to recognize before she defined, the unchanging faith at Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon. 4. What has been said applies to education. This must begin with the heart. Until a pupil's affections are won, the true groundwork of the process is not mastered. The repression of love will assuredly, sooner or later, avenge itself. Witness the case of J. S. Mill. (*Canon Liddon*.) *Love abounding through knowledge*:—This climax is unexpected. We should have thought "in fervour, zeal, self-sacrifice." Instead of that the direction is upward from the heart to the head. I. KNOWLEDGE REVEALS CHARACTER AND CHARACTER DRAWS OUT LOVE. We can only love a person whom we know to be lovable. This holds especially true of our relations to God. Enmity comes of ignorance of Him. Hence, in Jesus He has given us a revelation of His heart, and to know Christ is to love God. "My people is destroyed for lack of knowledge," is the epitaph written over the graves of scores of dead Christians. Neglecting the diligent study of the Scriptures they have no nutriment for their love, and it starves. II. KNOWLEDGE OF GOD BRINGS US INTO COMMUNION WITH THAT DIVINE LIFE WHICH IS THE SPRING OF ALL DIVINE LOVE. If God is love, the more we come into fellowship with Himself the more we shall come into the exercise and experience of His love. But it is only through knowledge that we can come into this experience. (*A. J. Gordon*.) *Knowledge the basis of love*:—I. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY CHRISTIANS HAVING THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. This cannot mean perfect knowledge. None but Deity can comprehend Deity. But we may have a true knowledge, and the difference between the two is that the former is a knowledge of all things that are true concerning God, and the latter of some things which are true. And what Christians know is as true as if they knew everything. They know, *e.g.*, God to be self-existent, omnipotent, just, merciful, &c., although they do not know the ground of His self-existence, &c. No man knows everything about anything, but the little he knows is as true as though he knew all. II. HOW CHRISTIANS GAIN THIS TRUE THOUGH PARTIAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. 1. By the light of nature, "The invisible things," &c. 2. By Divine revelation. Though God cannot tell men in any language all things about Himself, He can tell some things in their language which they can understand. III. THEIR TRUE LOVE FOR GOD IS FOUNDED ON THEIR TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. They do not love or worship an unknown God. Knowledge not ignorance is the mother of their devotion: which will appear if we consider—1. That if Christians should love God for what is not true concerning Him, they would love a false character of God, which would not be true, but false love—the same as loving a false god, which is the essence of idolatry. 2. It is the knowledge which Christians have of the real and supreme excellency of God that lays them under moral obligation to love Him supremely. The more they know of God the more they feel themselves bound to love Him with all their heart. Improvement: If Christians have some true knowledge of God from His works and Word, then—1. They may have some true knowledge of every doctrine that God has revealed. 2. There is a propriety in preaching upon any doctrine that God has revealed. 3. Christians have no right to disbelieve any doctrine because there is something mysterious in it. If we disbelieve on this ground, we must disbelieve everything. 4. Those who have gained this certain knowledge ought to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. 5. There is no excuse for religious errors. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *The importance of Christian knowledge*:—I. THE SUBJECTS WHICH CHRISTIANITY PRESENTS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT AND SUBLIME IN THE UNIVERSE.

II. JUST CONCEPTIONS OF THE TRUTH OF GOD ARE INDISPENSABLE TO THE POSSESSION OF TRUE HOLINESS. What is holiness but obedience to truth; truth desired, loved, obeyed? But how is truth to be obeyed unless it is known? It is an unchanging law of our being that the heart is affected through the medium of the understanding. III. WITHOUT THE SPIRIT OF THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE RAPID ADVANCES IN THE DIVINE LIFE. Christians have much to learn of God that they may desire greater manifestations of His glory; of themselves, that they may be stimulated to greater attainments; of their obligations, that they may press after perfect holiness. There are, of course, instances in which growth in knowledge does not secure growth in grace; but that is because truth does not make its appropriate impression on the mind, and is opposed by sin. But the clearer our views of God the more fervent our love of Him; of sin, the more self-abasing our repentance; of Christ, the stronger our faith; of duty, the stronger our desires to perform it. IV. THE ATTAINMENT OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE IS THE SOURCE OF PURE AND ELEVATED ENJOYMENT. Of all the prospective emotions the desire of knowledge is the most exalted. The pleasures of intellect transcend those of sense. How much purer and higher the felicity consequent on advances in the knowledge of God. The veriest infant in the school of Christ finds his understanding satisfied, his heart filled with love at the discovery of every new principle in the Word of God. V. RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE WIDENS THE SPHERE OF CHRISTIAN USEFULNESS. A well-informed Christian possesses a weight of character and a power of moral feeling, which exert the best influence. Such a man is always ready for action. If the spirit of His master rests upon him in proportion to his intellectual attainments, he will instruct the ignorant, &c. The Church has sustained no small detriment from the ignorance of good men. VI. THE CHARACTER OF OUR AGE FURNISHES A REASON FOR SOLICITUDE IN RELATION TO THE DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE. There is a strange apathy to the truth. It is an age of business, and not of investigation. Conclusion: 1. Ministers ought not to be reproached for instructive preaching, and for not yielding to the demand for sensationalism. 2. The love of truth is the conclusive test of Christian character. 3. Rest not in intellectual attainments in religion. (*Gardiner Spring, D.D.*) *Knowledge and judgment*:—These are the limits which define the course of love, and thus deepen it. I. ADVANCED KNOWLEDGE is derived from—1. Experience. 2. Attentive study of—(1) The Divine perfections. (2) The gospel mystery. (3) The Divine claims. (4) The principles of Christ's teaching, which should pervade all Christian conduct. II. MORAL PERCEPTION. 1. Results from the full exertion of every moral sense. (1) There are many things in Christian life which cannot be formulated, but must be felt to be known. (2) Grace awakens the moral senses. Love makes them delicately sensitive to spiritual things. Christian life appeals to them. Experience comes in the exercise of them. (3) This experience produces a profounder knowledge and a deeper love by intensifying spiritual perceptions, because—2. It is a medium of communication with the unseen and eternal. 3. As a medium of communication with God it makes the soul superior to, and independent of, the senses. When these close at eventide, the moral senses only open wider for the morning sun. 4. It robes the soul with a halo of light more assuring and glorious than "the glory-cloud" emitted. 5. It imparts to the soul that delicate tact and instinct which almost instinctively perceives what is right, and almost unconsciously shrinks from what is wrong. 6. It is indestructible by death, and shall be an imperishable avenue for the soul's perpetual advance in knowledge. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *Love inseparable from Christian life*:—Goethe says, "We hear of a particular regulation in force in the British naval service. The whole cordage, from the strongest to the weakest, has a red thread moving throughout it, which cannot be twisted out without undoing it all. In this way even the smallest parts are recognized as the property of the Crown." Love in the Christian character, we may say, is that which is woven into every part of it, is that which cannot be removed without destroying the whole, and is that which is enduring and indestructible evidence that the character is owned by Him who is King. (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*) *Love: its critical function*:—Love abounding in all discernment distinguishes the wrong from the right, just as a good ear distinguishes a false and imperfect note from the true. (*Webster and Wilkinson.*) *The training of love*:—As we train the bodily senses of sight, and touch, and hearing to discriminate accurately, and bring them by exercise, voluntary or involuntary, to exquisite precision and almost unflinching accuracy, so our love must be trained to be itself a universal spiritual sense, at once the eye and the ear and the hand of the heart, seeing and hearing and touching in

things Divine, with a sure and delicate feeling that seldom needs correction. (W. B. Pope, D.D.)

Regulated love.—The chariot in ancient warfare had its two occupants, the warrior and the charioteer: the one could not engage the enemy unless the other held the reins and guided the course. So love, the true, the only commissioned soldier in that warfare whose every triumph is peace, can fight towards victory only when knowledge directs and controls every movement that is made. (J. Hutchinson, D.D.)

Advancement in knowledge must be constant.—Spain once held both sides of the Mediterranean at the Straits of Gibraltar. So highly did she value her possessions, that she stamped on her coin the two Pillars of Hercules (as the promontories of rock were called); and on a scroll thrown over these were the words, *ne plus ultra*, "no more beyond." But one day a bold spirit sailed far beyond these pillars, and found a new world of beauty. Then Spain, wisely convinced of ignorance, struck the word *ne* from the coin, and left *plus ultra*, "more beyond." How many a man, whose conceit is great, thinks he has reached the limits of knowledge, when further investigation would open to him a continent of truth before unknown. (Bp. Simpson.)

The excellence of love.—We have many servants who regard their work as drudgery, and though they do their duties, they do them with no regard for our interests; but the old-fashioned servants were of another kind. If you have any such, you will prize one of such above a thousand others. They love their master, and they identify themselves with his interests. Old John did not want orders, he was a law to himself, he served from love. When his master one day spoke about their parting, he wanted to know where his master was going, for he had no idea of going himself: he was part and parcel of the household, and was worth his weight in diamonds. You may well say, "I would give my eyes to get such a servant as that." I dare say you would. Our Lord Jesus gave Himself that He might make such servants out of us. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Love rich in purse.—A poor widow contributed to the Dorpatian Branch of the Russian Bible Society a rouble; and, to the question whether that sum was not rather too much for one in her circumstances, she answered, "Love is not afraid of giving too much."

Intelligent love.—Blind love fails in any sphere of action. A true-hearted boy, who finds his mother suddenly made a widow, and his young sisters and himself fatherless, and sees want coming on with fierce visage and rapid steps like an armed man, is impelled by his love to the dear ones around him to rush at once into the midst of the struggle of life; and in the place, and with the weapons, of a full-grown man, give the enemy battle. The love and the zeal are most beautiful and admirable, yet those among the onlookers who have experience of the world's difficulty cannot but fear that the young hero may soon be brought home from the battle-field wounded and bleeding and despondent. He needs training. His love must have the knowledge of men and things along with it, before it is likely to reach its aim. So with Christian love generally, going forth to do work for God and man in the world. Having talents entrusted to us by God to lay out for Him, we must strive—by the study of our powers and opportunities, temptations and dangers; by the consideration of present circumstances, and by cautious forecast; by carefully looking in and out, and at all things in the light of God's Word—to become wise and successful spiritual traffickers. (R. Johnstone, LL.B.)

The love of God without knowledge.—The affections of the human soul are certainly not devoid of heavenly aspirations; but what if they do not clearly know God? Then, like the vine stretching up its tendrils fingers and finding no support, and so falling back again to creep upon the earth from which it sprung, the heart that fails to find God, only loves the world the more desperately and hopelessly. Blessed be God, therefore, for the Cross of Christ, that trellis for the heart's affection. It is this by which the soul learns to know the love of God; and upon it the renewed affections climb higher and higher; beneath it they strike their roots deeper and deeper; upon its arms they reach out farther and farther; evermore increasing in love by increasing in knowledge. (A. J. Gordon.)

The knowledge of Christ the mainstay of brotherly love.—Two burnished reflectors can radiate the brightness from one to the other if there be a light between them. But, if each only reflects from the other, there can be no illumination: because neither furnishes any supply of light. So two Christians, reciprocating each other's affections, will make but a poor exhibit of brotherly love, unless they have Christ between them as the centre and source of their life. And there is just as little to admire in mutual fellowship among Christians, unless Christ be in the midst of them as the centre of that fellowship. To exhort one another, to comfort one another, and to love one another, are all most solemn duties. But where will be the profit in them

unless Christ be the central theme, and His grace and glory be the central objects of our admiration and praise? The cherubim stood with "their faces one toward another;" but the mercy-seat was between. And it was upon faces bending in eager gaze upon those "things which the angels desire to look into," that the glory of God was reflected. If we get cheer and brightness from looking into each other's faces, and communing with each other in the services of God's house, it will be because Christ stands in the midst of us, the object of all our meditations and the fountain of all our joys. "This is eternal life, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 10. That ye may approve the things that are excellent.—*True religion is*—I. THE HIGHEST INTELLIGENCE. II. THE FAIREST ACCOMPLISHMENT. III. THE MOST ENDURING POSSESSION. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Life-work*:—I. RESPECTS judgment—motive—action. II. REQUIRES energy—till the day of Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Spiritual discrimination*:—I. DEMANDS the exercise of the most intelligent and sensitive charity. II. COMMANDS a wide field of effort, viz., the bad, the good, the better, the best—in character, life, doctrine, practice, enjoyment, attainment. III. IMPLIES the admission and use of a noble liberty of thought, judgment, and action. IV. INVOLVES a weighty and far-reaching responsibility. V. IS ESSENTIAL to a pure and blameless life. (*G. G. Balliard.*) *Discerning with a purpose*:—I. A SUGGESTION THAT A SPIRIT OF DISCERNMENT IS REQUIRED FROM BELIEVERS IN CHRIST JESUS. The reference is founded on the common action of comparing one thing with another, so as to find the best. A capability to prove which is best for us bodily in food, e.g., would save us from many physical ailments. How many spiritual troubles might be avoided if, in prayer and preaching, we always fixed upon what best presented the glory and grace of Christ. Possessing this faculty we should—1. Know what course it would be right to take in spiritual difficulties. The banker draws his finger across a bank-note and says, "That is forged," or "That is genuine." His senses are exercised to prove them. So we ought to be able to perceive the signs of evil, however covered up, and the marks of God's will, however faint. 2. Understand the relation between duty and comfort. II. A PURPOSE PLACED IN VIEW OF THIS SPIRIT OF DISCERNMENT. 1. It has respect to the day of Christ, when every man's work will be tried. (1) So we are not to purpose our own satisfaction. Many endeavour to attain certain excellencies so that they may stand well with themselves. (2) We are not to purpose to be satisfied with the opinions of the world. There are men who think that if they secure the approbation of their neighbours, they are as good as they need be. 2. It has set before it sincerity and blamelessness. (1) The Christian is seen standing in the light, and gives no occasion for others to stumble against him. Seeing him in family, business, party, or Church, they have no cause to say, "He acts so as to stand between me and Christ." (2) To be counted sincere and without offence is the proof of a high attainment. The Christian must not be behind, but before men of the world in good points of character and conduct. (*D. G. Watt, M.A.*) *The things that are excellent*:—Two things are necessary for all noble life. 1. That we have some ideal of duty. 2. That we are honest in trying to realize this ideal. The words before us suggest these necessities. I. AS CHRISTIANS WE OUGHT TO APPROVE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT. 1. Not merely things which are opposed, or differ, as good and bad. It requires no gift of grace to do this. Natural conscience tells us what is right and wrong. All know that truth is better than falsehood. When men call good evil, they are condemned as much by the world as the Church. It is melancholy to think, however, that some have fallen as low as this in Christian communities, and make a gain of godliness. 2. Paul had a higher level of thought in view—a certain spiritual sensitiveness which recoils from evil, and is drawn to good. 3. We all fail more or less in the cultivation of this higher-mindedness. The world is too much with us, weighing down our desires, and whispering a religion of convenience, rather than of aspiration. Our frequent failures, too, tend to keep us contented at a low level. 4. The fineness of spiritual perception is of value in the world. It is a key which unlocks secrets of character. It is not easily deceived. It knows what is true and excellent in art, literature, society, and politics, more readily than others who let their moral ideals grow dim. II. THE FURTHER NECESSITY OF OUR BEING SINCERE AND WITHOUT OFFENCE. Our life and thought must be knit together, our ideal translated into fact. 1. Sincerity is the basis of all good character. A man whose

inner and outer life is a contradiction loses even the respect of the world. It would be better if all Christian Churches were more intent on the realities of Christian character; their reward would be greater, and their contentions less. 2. We are also to be without offence. (*Principal Tulloch.*) *Sincere and without offence*:—I. A FEW WORDS AGAINST INSINCERITY. 1. Against all forms of it. We are all in danger of it, and its sources are numberless, insidious, and within our own breast. It arises from the prevalent excitement; men-pleasing, fiction, ritualism. 2. Against religious insincerity. Here the danger is greatest. Men don't counterfeit copper, but gold. He that takes a bad sovereign loses twenty times as much as he who takes a bad shilling. Hence the Word of God is singularly full, and strong against this evil, and religion is described as "wisdom that cometh from above;" without hypocrisy; faith unfeigned; unfeigned love of the brethren; love without dissimulation. 3. Remember our Lord's conduct against it. Every other form of evil is condemned, but with pity and hope. Hypocrisy is branded as beyond the reach of mercy. II. A FEW WORDS TO PROMOTE SINCERITY. A life sincere and without reproach is sure to be—1. Harmless and useful. No stumbling-block is more fatal than insincerity. We naturally trust the appearance of goodness; but if it proves rottenness, and gives way, we stumble and hurt ourselves. Few things stagger young Christians more than the inconsistencies of older Christians. Sincerity, however, silences reproach, inspires confidence, commands respect, kindles affection, draws to fellowship. 2. Strong. St. James speaks of a "double-minded man," *i.e.*, a man with two souls—one his real self, the other what he pretends to be. These are sure to play at see-saw. Such a life resembles ploughing with an ox and an ass, always ungainly and inefficient. Such a life is sure to stifle prayer. Reuben was unstable as water, and he did not excel. In opposition to this, the Bible commends the single heart and the single eye. What a man sees clearly he can grip tightly: when he sees his course plainly he goes on confidently. 3. Happy. When conscience smiles all is sunshine; when it frowns it will be to a man what Mordecai was to Haman. "Our rejoicing is this: the testimony of our conscience," &c. 4. Pre-eminently a life with God. 5. Will find its consummation in the coming of the Lord. (*J. Aldis.*) *Christian rectitude*:—The word "sincere" means a life which has the brightest light shined upon it, which is tried in that light, and approved as genuine. Christian rectitude consists in—I. INTERNAL SINCERITY. This involves—1. A concentratedness of heart upon one object. 2. A thoroughness of life's uniformity to that one object. 3. An unostentatious but manifest integrity. 4. The completeness of that manifestation shall be proportionate to the brightness of the testing-light. II. EXTERNAL BLAMELESSNESS. 1. Without being found guilty of an offence. 2. Without giving one. 3. Without taking one. III. A PRESENT STATE OF LIFE, WITH A GLORIOUS FUTURE DESTINATION. Then—1. Life shall be judged. 2. Life shall be made manifest. 3. Rectitude of life shall be approved. 4. Rectitude of life shall be rewarded. 5. The "good-work" begun in grace shall be crowned in glory. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *The discernment of things excellent*:—A house-keeper very rarely buys a supply of food without going through the process of noting different kinds so as to get that which is good. The man who works effectively on the Stock Exchange is the man who discerns the little differences which make one stock preferable to another, and who first observes the indications that a stock is about to take a more excellent place in the mart. I believe it is a habit of religious people, when they come into a new neighbourhood, to go from one place of worship to another, making comparisons amongst them, so as to prove that one which will best suit their temperaments—perhaps they would say, so as to approve that which is excellent. (*J. Aldis.*) *Discernment the result of experience*:—When offered food, a child takes palatableness only into account, and will as readily eat, if it be pleasant to the taste, what is unwholesome or even poisonous, as what is most nourishing. The power of discriminating, so as "to refuse the evil and choose the good," comes by experience. Now the skill which experience, to a great extent unsought, thus gives in the physical sphere, must, in the spiritual, be sought by definite pursuit. Observation and reading, the reading particularly of the biographies of eminent Christians—and especially the Bible biographies, which have an absolute truthfulness seldom even approached in others—these will supply materials, the thoughtful and prayerful consideration of which will produce acuteness of moral perception. There are Christians in whom natural delicacy of feeling and accuracy of judgment, fostered by various helpful surroundings, give, from the very beginning of their religious life, a faculty of

spiritual discrimination which acts almost with the readiness and certainty of an instinct. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) "*Sincere and without offence*" are words closely connected. "*Sincere*" seems to be an allusion to a practice common then and now. In the bazaars in the East goods are stored away in very obscure places, and persons go in to make their purchases, and purchase them in that dull light. Those who wish to know the matter thoroughly take the goods to the open space where the sunbeam plays, and then, under the full blaze of the light, if no flaw, and if no stain shall be revealed, the article is pronounced "*sincere*" in the sense of the text, and consequently without offence. He that walks in darkness knows not where he is going. He strikes against this, and he strikes against that, and he cannot understand it. He gets bewildered and ultimately overthrown. (*J. Aldis.*) *Sincerity*:—Some of us have seen the glorious blue of the Rhone, as it leaves the Lake of Geneva. A little way down, we have seen the Arve, loaded with mud, rush into the same channel. We have watched the two streams flow side by side, each in its own division of the channel, as if the pure could not permit the impure to mingle with it. But the earthly insinuates itself fully at last, and the river flows on, its colour still blue, but sadly changed from the heaven-like blue of its beginnings. Have we not often mourned, brethren, to see something like this in a Christian life—the hue of earth spreading itself lamentably over the hue of heaven? Faith in Christ brings the water from "the upper springs," to make the stream pure and sweet; but the muddy and bitter water from the world ever presses in, to mar and pollute. But "love, abounding in knowledge and in all judgment," can keep the stream clear, so that it reveals itself truly as a branch of the "pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, which proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) *Sincerity*:—In the palmy days of Roman prosperity, when her merchants lived in their marble palaces on the banks of the Tiber, there was a sort of emulation in the grandeur and artistic adornment of their dwellings. Good sculptors were eagerly sought after and employed. But tricks were sometimes practised, then as now; thus, if the sculptor came upon a flaw in the marble, or chipped a piece out by accident, he had a carefully-prepared wax, with which he filled in the chink, and so carefully fixed it as to be imperceptible. In process of time, however, heat or damp would affect the wax, and reveal its presence. The consequence was, that when new contracts were made for commissioned works of art, a clause was added to the effect that they were to be *sine cerâ*, or without cement. Hence we have a word picture of great significance. (*J. Tesseymann.*) *Sincere Christians*:—A flying fish sometimes attempts to fly, but it is no bird for all that. It only takes a little flight and then it is in the water again; but a true bird keeps on the wing, especially if it is such a bird as the eagle, whose untiring wing bears it above the clouds. Let us beware of prayers which leap up like a grasshopper and are soon down again. Let our prayers have the wings of a dove, let them fly away from earth and rest in God. Hypocrites pray by fits and starts; the genuine Christian "prays without ceasing." *One fault may spoil a life*:—Did you ever write a letter, and just as you were finishing it let your pen fall on it, or a drop of ink blot the fair page? It was the work of a moment, but the evil could not be effectually effaced. Did you never cut yourself unexpectedly and quickly? It took days or weeks to heal the wound, and even then a scar remained. It is related of Lord Brougham that one day he occupied a conspicuous place in a group to have his daguerreotype taken. But at an unfortunate moment he moved. The picture was taken, but his face was blurred. Do you ask what application we would make of these facts? Just this: "It takes a lifetime to build a character; it only takes one moment to destroy it." *Without offence*:—The word as used in the New Testament does not mean what we mean when we use the word now. You say you gave So-and-so "offence." You mean you made him angry. Well, if you put anything in a man's way in the dark and he strikes against it and he falls over it and hurts himself, most likely he will be angry. But the Bible does not concern itself about feeling. That is of no consequence. The Bible concerns itself with a man's being hurt—the mischief done. Hence always in the New Testament it means, concerning a man himself, that in his conduct and temper and speech he should not put anything in his practical course of life that may cause him to stumble and fall, not because he would be irritated but because he would be hurt. And so, with regard to others, we are to do nothing which might prove as a stumbling-block in a man's way as he is going on in his life, lest he also should strike against it and fall over it and be hurt. (*J. Aldis.*) *The day of Christ*:—It is striking to observe how diversified are the appellations given to that day: "The

day of judgment," "the day of wrath," "the day," "that day," "the great day," "the last day," "the day of God," "the day of Christ." Here it is, "the day of Christ"—the day that is coming, when He will give the crown of righteousness to all them that love His appearing. The day of His finished work, when grace brightens into glory. The day of Christ, when His doctrines will be made clear, no longer veiled in mystery, or troubled by debate; when the merit of His righteousness and sacrifice will be shown forth in the safety and honour of His redeemed and justified; when the splendour of His example will shine out full-orbed in the millions of imitations of that example, each one peculiar, but each one by grace made perfect at last, and all its perfection being the harmony betwixt itself and the example that had been set. "The day of Christ." The day of His triumph, every obstacle surmounted, every foe vanquished; the day of His recompense when He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall receive the joy set before Him, and "present to Himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle," &c. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness.—*Divine culture*.—I. THE FIELD.—The loving heart. II. THE SEED.—Righteousness. III. THE FRUIT.—Abundant. IV. THE HUSBANDMAN.—Jesus Christ. V. THE END.—"The glory and praise of God." (*G. G. Ballard.*) *Righteousness*.—I. ITS NATURE. II. ITS FRUITS. III. ITS SOURCE. IV. ITS END. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) I. THE FRUIT. II. THE POWER by which it is produced. III. THE MOTIVE. IV. THE MEASURE of righteousness. (*Ibid.*) *The fruits of righteousness*.—I. WHAT THEY ARE: good works, so called because they spring from righteousness as fruit from a tree. We must first be righteous, by the righteousness of God in us before we can do the works that are good. What this righteousness is Paul explains in Rom. iii. 9. 1. Learn to beware of them who tell you that our good works are that righteousness whereby we are justified before God. As well say that the fruit is the tree. 2. Beware of them that tell you that men not begotten in the faith of Christ are able to do the things that are good and pleasing to God. 3. Let this teach us how to examine our works whether they be good or no. Do they proceed from a lively faith in Christ Jesus? II. THEIR AUTHOR. Christ who is the author of every good thing in us by the grace of His Holy Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 5; Phil. ii. 13). 1. Let this warn us against them who would persuade us that we are able of ourselves to do that which is good. 2. Let this teach us to give all the praise to Him to whom it is due (Rev. v. 13). III. THEIR END (1 Cor. x. 31; Matt. v. 16; 1 Peter ii. 12). Let this try our motives. Do we do good that we may gain heaven or that we may glorify God? (*H. Airay, D.D.*) *Gospel holiness*.—I. THE EXPERIENCE—"Fruits of righteousness." Righteousness is right-mindedness. 1. Integrity is the fruit toward God and man. 2. Tenderness of conscience. 3. With these and other virtues we are to be filled. 4. Although the world may reproach us. II. THE MEANS—Union with Christ. Granted this, good works are inevitable, as a good tree must produce good fruits. III. THE END. God can take delight in nothing but holiness. It is His own nature. (*J. Summerfield, A.M.*) *Spiritual attainment*.—I. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF HEART PRECEDES RIGHTEOUSNESS OF LIFE. II. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF HEART IS SELF-DISSEMINATING. Its fruit is—1. Living. 2. Of harmonious unity. 3. Luxuriant. III. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF HEART, THE ONLY THING THAT CAN FILL THE CAPACITIES OF MAN. IV. FULNESS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS—fruit, is all Divine. It is Divine—1. In its source—"God giveth the increase." 2. In its medium of communication—"which is by Jesus Christ." 3. In its end—"unto the glory and praise of God." (1) To His "glory" before men. (2) To His "praise" among men. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *Fruits of righteousness*.—Just as the fruits which men, with grateful and rejoicing hearts, gather in at harvest-home are not only much in quantity, but also many in variety, so in the Church, the garden of the Lord, His planting that He may be glorified, there are manifold good thoughts and deeds and impulses, all springing up from the one seed of love, and maturing to life eternal, to be garnered in when "the harvest of the earth is ripe." (*J. Hutchison, D.D.*) *Abounding fruitfulness*.—It is not enough to give no offence, you must edify; to abstain from evil, you must do good. As the perfection of a tree is to bring forth good fruits, and not simply that it should not bear bad. For according to that, those which bear no fruit at all might pass for good trees. Thus the praise of a Christian is to lead a life which is not only exempt from the corruption of sin, but which abounds in all kinds of virtues, which is covered and enriched by holy acts worthy of the name by which we are called. For He has snatched us from the soil of the world, or more properly of hell, where, like the

plants of Sodom, we bore but empty and useless fruits, and those which were poisonous and deadly. He has transplanted us into the paradise of God, His Church; where, by the efficacy of His blood, His Word, and His Spirit, He hath shed in us thoughts, hopes, and affections totally different from those we had formerly, namely, hatred and contempt for the world and sin, admiration and love for heaven and holiness. (*J. Daillé.*) *Advantages of advanced piety*:—Fighting faults is the most discouraging thing in the world. When corn reaches a certain height, no more weeds can grow among it. The corn overshadows and grows them down. Let men fill themselves full of good things. Let them make their love, and purity, and kindness to grow up like corn, that every evil and noxious thing within them may be overshadowed and die. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The trees of righteousness blossoming, and bringing forth fruit*:—I. How A CHRISTIAN BRINGS FORTH FRUIT. I answer: he brings forth fruit "in the vine"; by nature we are barren; there is not one good blossom growing on us; but when by faith we are engrafted into Christ, then we grow and fructify; "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me." Jesus Christ is that blessed root which shoots up that sap of grace into His branches. II. WHAT THAT FRUIT IS WHICH A GOOD CHRISTIAN BRINGS FORTH. 1. A Christian brings forth inward fruit: "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." 2. A Christian brings forth outward fruit. (1) The fruit of good discourse; "a wholesome tongue is a tree of life." Gracious speeches fall from the lips of a godly man, as fruit from a tree. (2) The fruit of good works. God will say at the last day, Show Me thy faith by thy works. 3. A Christian brings forth kindly fruit. The godly man bringeth forth his fruit; that is, he brings forth that fruit which is proper for him to bear. But what is this kindly and proper fruit? I answer, when we are good in our callings and relations; in a magistrate, justice is kindly fruit; in a minister, zeal; in a parent, instruction; in a child, reverence; in a master, good example; in a servant, obedience; in the husband, love; in the wife, submission; in a tradesman, diligence; in a soldier, innocence. A tree of God's planting brings forth His fruit, that which is suitable and proper. I shall never believe him to be good, that doth not bear kindly fruit; a good Christian, but a bad master; a good Christian, but a bad parent, doth not sound well. The excellency of a Christian is to bring forth proper fruit; wherein lies the goodness of a member in the body, but to discharge its proper office? the eye is to see, the ear to hear, &c. So the excellency of a Christian is to bring forth that fruit which God hath assigned to him: what is a thing good for which doth not do its proper work? what is a clock good for that will not strike? what is a ship good for that will not sail? what is a rose good for that doth not smell? what is that professor good for that doth not send forth a sweet perfume in his relation? the commendation of a thing is when it puts forth its proper virtue. Not to bring forth suitable fruit, spoils all the other fruit which we bring forth. If a man were to make a medicine, and should leave out the chief ingredient, the medicine would lose its virtue. Relative graces do much beautify and set off a Christian; it is the beauty of a star to shine in its proper orb; relative grace doth bespangle a Christian. 4. A good Christian brings forth seasonable fruit, he that bringeth forth fruit in his season; everything is beautiful in his time. That may be good at one time, which at another may be out of season. There is a great deal of skill in the right timing of a thing; duties of religion must be performed in the fit juncture of time. (1) Christian duties that relate to our neighbour must be observed in their season. Our reproving others must be seasonable. Affliction opens the ear to discipline. Our comforting others must be seasonable; "a word spoken in due season, how good is it?" (2) Duties of religion that relate to God must be performed in their season. To read at home, when the word is a preaching, or the sacrament celebrating, is unseasonable, nay, sinful; as Hushai said, "the counsel is not good at this time": one duty is to prepare for another, but not to jostle out another; fruit must put forth seasonably. Let all the trees of righteousness bring forth seasonable fruit; in prosperity be thankful, in adversity patient. I. It shows us who is a Christian in God's calendar, namely, the fruit-bearing Christian. As soon as the sap of grace is infused, it puts forth itself in evangelical fruit. II. Here is an indictment against three sorts. 1. Such as bring forth no fruit; "Israel is an empty vine." O how many unfruitful hearers are there, who evaporate into nothing but froth and fume, being like those ears which run out all into straw! they give God neither the early fruit nor the latter. To the unfruitful Christian let me say four things. (1) Unfruitfulness is a shame: barrenness of old was counted a great

shame. (2) What account can the unfruitful Christian give to God? (3) They that do not bring forth good fruit, shall never taste of the fruits that grow in heaven. 2. It reproves such as bring forth evil fruit. 3. It reproves such as bring forth good fruit, but to a bad end; "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself": a man had as good bring forth no fruit, as bring forth fruit unto himself. What is it for one to bring forth fruit unto himself? Prayer is good; but when a man prays only to show his parts, this is to bring forth fruit unto himself. Works of mercy are good, but when a man gives alms, not so much to feed the poor, as to feed his pride, now he brings forth fruit to himself, and this fruit is worm-eaten. III. 1. Let this exhort all to fruitfulness. (1) Fruit is that which God expects from us, we are His plantations; and, "who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?" (2) Fruitfulness is one of the most distinctive characters of a Christian; "the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit." But may not hypocrites bring forth fruit? (a) They do not bring forth fruit in the Vine; they bring forth in the strength of parts, not in the strength of Christ. (b) Hypocrites bring forth something like fruit, but it is not the right fruit. The fruit they bear is not sweet. (3) Fruitfulness adorns a Christian; the fruit adorns the tree; a fruit-bearing Christian is an ornament to religion; the more fruitful the branch is, the more fair to look on. A dead tree, as it is unserviceable, so it is uncomely. A Christian, decked with the fruits of righteousness, is beautiful and glorious. (4) Fruitfulness is a good evidence to show for heaven; the fruits of love, humility, good works, are, as St. Bernard saith, seeds of hope, signs of predestination, the happy presages of future glory. The righteousness of faith is always accompanied with the fruits of righteousness. He that can show good fruit, goes full sail to heaven. 2. It exhorts them that do bear fruit, that they would bring forth more fruit; do not think you have fruit enough, but bring forth further degrees of sanctity; "every branch that beareth fruit, he pruneth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (1) This is the end why we have new oost laid out upon us, that we should bring forth more fruit. (2) The fuller we are of fruit, the more we are like Christ, who was "full of grace and truth." He received the Spirit without measure. (3) Bearing much fruit will usher in abundance of comfort into the soul in these two exigencies. Store of fruit will give comfort in the hour of death: a little grace will make us above the fear of death. O what joy will it be on the deathbed, when a Christian can bring his sheaves full of corn! when he can show his five talents that he hath gained by trading! when there is not only a drop or two of oil, but his lamp full of oil! what though the devil show God our debts, if we can show Him our fruit? (4) The more your fruit is increased, the more your glory is increased; he whose pound gained ten, was made ruler over ten cities. IV. The last use is of direction. I shall lay down some means to fruitfulness. 1. Be sensible of unfruitfulness. 2. If you would be fruitful, remove those things which will hinder fruitfulness. Cherishing any secret lust in the heart; sin lived in, is like vermin to the tree, which destroys the fruit; grace cannot thrive in a sinful heart. 3. The third means to fruitfulness is weeping for sin. Moisture helps germination in trees; holy tears do water the trees of God, and make them more fruitful. 4. If you would be fruitful often apply the blood of Christ, and the promises. (1) Apply the blood of Christ. Naturalists say, that blood applied to the root of some trees makes them bear better. Sure I am, the blood of Christ applied to the heart, makes it flourish more in holiness. (2) Apply the promises. 5. Another means to fruitfulness is humility. The low grounds are most fruitful: "the valleys are covered with corn"; the humble heart is the fruitful heart. 6. If you would be fruitful in grace, be much in good conference; "then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." 7. If you would be fruit-bearing trees, be near the water of the sanctuary; "he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out the roots by the river; her leaf shall be green, nor shall it cease from yielding fruit." 8. And lastly, if you would fructify apace, go to God and desire Him to make you fruitful; God is called the Husbandman, and He hath an art above all other husbandmen; they can plant and prune trees, but if they be dead they cannot make them bear. (T. Watson.)

Vers. 12-20. I would ye should understand, brethren.—*Ministerial life*:—Its aim, pursuit, and success, ought to be—I. TRANSPARENT. This a true minister's—1. Duty. 2. Desire. 3. Privilege. II. FAMILIAR TO THE CHURCH. This—1. Demanded by their community of interest. 2. Necessary to the growth of their mutual sympathy. 3. His vindication against false rumours and slander. 4.

Should ever bring glory to God. 5. Ought to be cultivated, intelligent, and loving. (G. G. Ballard.) *The gospel in Rome*:—I. THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE APOSTLE'S IMPRISONMENT. 1. His imprisonment gave notoriety to the cause for which he was imprisoned. 2. His own soldier guards heard him talk to his visitors, and themselves became the means of extending the cause. As one man relieved another day after day, the whole of the imperial guard was brought under Christian teaching. 3. These guards would make this strange prisoner the theme of many homes in the city. 4. The apostle's calmness and consistency began to tell on the Christians themselves. (1) The Gentile Christians in sympathy with the liberal views of the apostle plucked up heart of grace. (2) The Jewish Christians envious of the apostle's influence doubled their zeal. II. THE UNVEILING OF THE APOSTLE'S HEART THROUGH THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL. We see—1. His perfect self-forgetfulness. Neither his imprisonment nor the preaching of envy and strife could disturb his confidence in Christ. 2. His large and hopeful charity. Even the Judaizers preached Christ. 3. His spirit of humble and trustful dependence—(1) On the prayer of the Philippians. (2) On the supply of the Spirit through Jesus Christ. 4. His thorough and absorbing devotedness to his work. Conclusion: Note—1. The power of personal influence. 2. That this influence can only be sustained by personal union with Christ. (J. J. Goadby.) *The gospel in Rome*:—The Philippians had expressed through Epaphroditus, no doubt, besides warm sympathy with Paul, anxiety respecting his prospects and those of the gospel. Not merely was there a clog on the great missionary himself, but his persecution was likely to discourage the Roman Christians. He hastens to reassure them. I. The first result of God's gracious intervention to make the wrath of man praise Him was that THE CAUSE OF PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT BECAME EXTENSIVELY KNOWN. 1. His bonds were "well known as being in connection with Christ." This was no doubt the form in which the cause of his imprisonment would present itself; yet the full and precious force of the "in Christ" is to be held fast here. It was through his union with Christ—(1) That the bonds were on his limbs—badges, therefore, not of slavery but of freedom. (2) That he was prompted by the Spirit of Christ to earnest effort. (3) That he was sustained by grace to bear his bonds with patience and make them instruments for glorifying God. 2. This was known among the Prætorian guards. He had no privacy day or night, and seeing his purity, patience, gentleness, and kindness, they soon saw that he was no criminal, and felt that his bonds were in Christ. 3. In all other places, to all who knew anything about His imprisonment. II. The second result was that PAUL'S EXAMPLE BECAME STIMULATING. 1. We may infer that in the early Church every member according to his opportunities spoke the word of the Lord. "Most" of the members of the Roman Church were certainly evangelists. The discoverer of a remedy is bound by humanity to make the remedy known: so surely should he who knows of the Divine physician. In heathen countries evangelism is the immediate fruit of conversion; but also many professing Christians never speak a word for Christ. 2. The observation of the apostle's endurance of suffering strengthened the faith of the Church, and spurred them to increased effort. Thus it comes that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. This was the effect of the death of Stephen; of the persecution of the Waldenses and of the Malagasy. 3. The secret of this is told in the little phrase "in the Lord." The man out of Christ can see only the chains and the possibilities of death: the man who is "in Christ" sees also—(1) The spiritual grandeur of work such as had brought the apostle to bonds. (2) The grandeur of suffering for Christ. (3) The sympathy of Christ with the sufferer. (4) The growth of religious strength and beauty through the affliction. 4. The preachers were under the influence of strangely divergent motives, but the apostle rejoiced that, however, perfectly or imperfectly, Christ was preached by all. (R. Johnstone, LL.B.) *Paul's sorrows and joys*:—I. PAUL'S SORROWS. Persecuted—imprisoned—insulted. II. PAUL'S JOYS. The progress of the gospel—the love, courage, and confidence of the brethren—the proclamation of Christ. (J. Lyth, D.D.) *Paul's captivity*:—I. THE FIRST RESULT WAS THAT IT HAD BEEN SERVICEABLE FOR THE DIFFUSION OF THE TRUTH AMONG THOSE WHO OTHERWISE MIGHT NOT HAVE HEARD OF IT. Man may be bound but not the Word of God (2 Tim. ii. 9). We may almost trace his rejoicing in his chain (Acts xxviii. 20; 2 Tim. i. 16). They were to him as links of spiritual pearls; his garb of affliction as a robe of beauty because they were manifest in Christ. He was soon seen not to be a political offender or a law breaker, but a humble, patient, contented witness for Christ. II. THE SECOND RESULT WAS THAT IT MADE

THOSE WHO WERE ALREADY BELIEVERS INCREASINGLY BOLD OF SPEECH. If he could preach in fetters much more should they preach in freedom. But there is a dark shadow on the picture, Christ was preached from varying motives. Yet the apostle will rejoice that He is preached at all. In the Epistle to the Galatians the preachers of Christ of envy and strife were unsparingly denounced; but here he is not comparing party with party, but Christianity with heathenism. Even an imperfect gospel was precious in view of the nameless corruptions of Rome. The same experience is seen still in mission fields, all minor differences of Church organization and creed dwindle into nothingness in the presence of the hideous corruption of the pagan world. So ought it to be in Christian lands in view of home heathenism. (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*) *The gospel furthered by opposition:—*

I. THE EXPERIENCE OF PAUL. He was brought into notoriety—into contact with persons of influence—to Rome the centre human power—had leisure to write his Epistles. II. THE EXPERIENCE OF ALL BELIEVERS. Nothing happens by chance—all things are overruled by Christ—we should therefore gladly toil and suffer in His cause. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Things concerning himself:—*Knowing the deep solicitude of the Philippians, but not to what extent they may have been misinformed as to his imprisonment, he makes haste to set their minds at rest. But if we expect that he will dilate upon the details of his external fortunes, or open the secrets of his prison house, we shall be disappointed. What little may be recovered of these must be gathered from other sources. I. There can be no doubt that St. Paul here REFERS TO THAT IMPRISONMENT WITH WHICH THE BOOK OF THE ACTS CLOSES. Regard this event—1. Under the purely human aspect. Three times in his life was St. Paul, as he gloried in saying, “a prisoner of Jesus Christ,” besides “bonds oft.” The first was at Cæsarea, when he pleaded his own and his Master’s cause, and claimed the right of a Roman citizen to appeal unto Cæsar. In this he gratified one of the deepest desires of his heart. “I must see Rome.” It was his holy ambition to carry the gospel to the centre of the world. The Lord ratified the desire of his heart. “As thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so shalt thou bear witness in Rome.” But His Master had not indicated that He was to go bound. Apostles, like ourselves, must wait for the unfoldings of providence. He reached Rome and was subjected to mild restraint. During two years he was kept in suspense: then he seems to have been dismissed, but returned again after a few years’ mission to the West, to the same place, and was beheaded. All this is what he meant by the “things that concern me.” As to those details we should have been so glad to receive, about himself and the Roman Church, he is silent, perhaps because his letters were closely watched. 2. When he lays the stress on “have fallen out rather,” he gives us a hint of another side of the matter. The hand of God had been leading him in a way he knew not. It was not Paul alone who had appealed unto Cæsar, but Christ in him and Christ’s cause. It was part of the manifold wisdom of God that he should consolidate the Church in Rome. St. Paul’s special revelation of truth—“my gospel”—was necessary to the perfection of evangelical teaching, and therefore was he, not Peter, sent to Rome. II. RATHER UNTO THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL. The apostle’s imprisonment had positively tended to promote the kingdom of Christ. 1. Generally this had been the case. Paul was still the centre of the European gospel, and had time and opportunity now for a calm survey of the whole estate of Christ’s Church. His spirit was surrendered to the undisturbed influence of meditation and prayer. What the three great Epistles—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians—owe to this seclusion, those who study them may conjecture. Certain it is they have tended greatly to the furtherance of the gospel. 2. More particularly his bonds have promoted the gospel—(1) By being made known through Rome in their connection with the Redeemer. He was known, marked, inquired about as the most eminent representative of Christianity to the army and to great numbers who assembled in his own hired house. (2) By their effect in stimulating others to preach Christ. (a) The first class of these preachers are described as feeling the good influence of the apostle’s bonds in two ways: first they were inspired with boldness by his Christian endurance; secondly, their love to the cause of Christ was increased by their sympathy with his devotion as set for the defence of the gospel. (b) But these bonds stirred up a different class of preachers; the weak brethren of whom he speaks as exerting so much influence in Rome (Rom. xiv.). Weak in faith and scrupulosity, but strong in prejudice and bitterness, who thought that by preaching a more contracted gospel, they would add bitterness to his bonds. As a confederate company they were actuated by “strife” and “faction”; being only in a

minority, they sought to increase their numbers and raise a party that would neutralize this Gentile gospel. 3. By a remarkable expression St. Paul declares his self-forgetting concentration of heart on the furtherance of Christ's gospel (ver. 18). (1) The exclamation, "What then," shows that he has something to say which demands, as it were, an apology to himself and others; but he boldly goes on to give the ground of his rejoicing and his condemnation of every impure motive in the preaching of Christ. (2) This rejoicing is—(a) His pure and loyal exultation that by all means the name of Christ was more widely proclaimed. (b) His gladness that what was mingled with so much private disquietude would issue in the furtherance of his own salvation. Fidelity to public duty must go hand in hand with trembling solicity for individual fidelity. (c) To what did he look for personal assurance and establishment in grace? Not to any guaranteed apostolical prerogative; not to the long-disciplined strength of his moral nature; but to the common heritage of all Christians—"the supply of Christ's Spirit" through the prayers of his fellow saints united with his own. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *The triumphs of the gospel*.—I. CONTINUE in spite of oppression. II. ARE SECURED by opposite agencies. III. ARE A SOURCE of joy to its adherents. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) The things that have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.—The Philippians looked upon the imprisonment as a calamity; Paul assures them that it was an element of prosperity. This shows how much our estimate of men and things depends upon the angle from which we conduct the examination. Circumstances are often the only lexicons which can determine the meaning of words. "Ruin" at Philippi meant "coronation" at Rome. Much depends on the plane of vision as well as upon optical power. There is a germ of prophecy here. By and by we shall see life from higher standpoints. It is better for the student to study his dark problems at Rome than at Philippi. Circumstances the most untoward may in reality be advancing the Divine kingdom. Every purpose of God may be thwarted, but the outcome of the ages will show that God's great plan has been realized. I. GOD'S PROVIDENCE IS NOT TO BE INTERPRETED IN FRAGMENTS. II. THE MORAL IS HIGHER THAN THE PERSONAL. Paul is in prison; the gospel is free. III. THE BONDS OF ONE MAN MAY GIVE INSPIRATION TO THE LIBERTY OF ANOTHER (ver. 14). IV. THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL DEPENDS UPON NO ONE MAN. V. EVEN THE AFFLICTED HAVE A MISSION. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Bonds in Christ*.—I. CANNOT ARREST THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL. II. ARE THE PROMISE OF FUTURE GLORY. III. ARE MORE HONOURABLE THAN AN IMPERIAL CROWN, for—1. They are worn in the service of the King of kings. 2. Worn in royal spirit. 3. Made the means of confirming others. 4. Overruled for the extension of the kingdom. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Paul's bonds in Christ exhibited*.—I. HIS OWN MORAL BLAMELESSNESS. II. HIS SELF-DEVOTION TO CHRIST. III. HIS REAL DIGNITY. The omen of civil degradation was the sign of his relationship with the Lord of the universe. IV. HIS MORAL FREEDOM. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *The ministry of Paul the prisoner*.—I. THE THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED UNTO ME (see history of Paul as the prisoner of Jesus Christ, Acts xxi., xxviii.) 1. Popular tumult in Jerusalem. 2. Apprehension by Lysias, bound and ordered to be examined by scourging. 3. Placed at the bar of the Sanhedrim and ordered to be smitten on the mouth by the High Priest. 4. Conspiracy against his life, exposed, defeated. 5. Taken prisoner to Cæsarea. Tried before Felix. Then before Festus, afterwards before Agrippa and Berenice. 6. Appeals to Cæsar, shipwrecked, arrives at Rome. 7. In Rome delivered to the captain of the guard, permitted to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him (Acts xxviii. 30-31) for two years. II. HAVE FALLEN OUT RATHER UNTO THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL. The development of events in a consecrated life—1. Is the work of an overruling Providence. 2. Produces startling results, disappointing alike to the hopes of enemies and the fears of friends. 3. Whatever may be its starting point, attains its end in the advancement of the gospel. 4. Illustrates how moral principles when tried in suffering become mighty forces in the world's evangelization. 5. A pledge that suffering with Christ shall be followed by a fellowship of glory. (*Ibid.*) *The powerlessness of persecution*.—I. PERSECUTIONS FURTHER RATHER THAN HINDER THE GOSPEL. In all ages the Church has been increased rather than diminished by them (Exod. i; Dan. iii.). When Christ was crucified they thought they had rooted out His name and doctrine for ever; but by the Cross the kingdom was established. II. HOW COMES THIS TO PASS? Not by the intentions of enemies, nor the virtue of the saints' sufferings. 1. By the power of Christ (Psa. ii. 1). 2. When men see the saints' undauntedness, their patience, the power of God

strengthening them, and their triumph over death, their very example brings many into the Church. 3. The Word of God is not bound, though the preacher may be (2 Tim. ii. 9). III. THE USE. 1. To be comforted in all our troubles which the wicked raise up against us, if the gospel is advanced thereby. 2. To condemn the faintness and backsliding of many in troubles (Luke xiv. 26-27). 3. Not to doubt of the truth or dislike professors when they are persecuted. (*H. Airay, D.D.*) *Christian boldness*:—I. THE RESULT of a firm confidence in the Lord. II. INCREASES upon the approach of persecution. III. NECESSARY to true witness bearing. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *Expectations unexpectedly fulfilled*:—Paul was in Rome. His earnest wish was gratified, but how differently from what he had expected. But he did not murmur. All had happened for the furtherance of the gospel. Let us look at the circumstances by which, notwithstanding his imprisonment, his original expectations were now unexpectedly realized. Consider—I. THE AMOUNT OF LIBERTY GRANTED HIM. For some unknown reason, instead of being shut up within the Pretorian barracks, he was permitted to dwell in a hired lodging of his own, and “receive all who might come to him.” He was not forbidden to preach to his visitors, and many would go away deeply impressed. II. THE ADDITIONAL EFFICACY GIVEN TO HIS PREACHING BY HIS BONDS. He was kept under strict guard, being chained to a Roman soldier. It might have been thought that had he been allowed to go unfettered he might have accomplished more. But the fact of his bondage drew multitudes who might otherwise not have heard him, and his chains were a token of his sincerity. It became manifest that his bonds were in Christ and that he was not afraid of imprisonment or death. Onesimus was but one of many begotten by his bonds. III. INTO WHAT UNEXPECTED QUARTERS HIS INFLUENCE PENETRATED. Had a Roman Christian previous to Paul’s coming been asked what section of the population would be the last to feel the power of the gospel he would probably have pointed to the rude, hardened soldiers who were in attendance on Nero. But Paul comes and lo! the pretorium is one of the first places to feel his influence. IV. HOW HIS IMPRISONMENT INFLUENCED MANY OF THOSE WHO WERE ALREADY PREACHING THE GOSPEL. We might have thought that the sight of Paul’s chains would depress. Instead of this it quickened their zeal. Let us learn a lesson of hope in God. 1. For the progress of His kingdom. 2. For our own welfare. (*T. C. Finlayson.*) *Irresistible moral influence*:—Moral influence springing from and devoted to Christ resists all mere physical and local restrictions. Paul’s moral influence exerted a mighty power. I. UNDER THE MOST DISADVANTAGEOUS CIRCUMSTANCES—in bonds. II. WITH A VERY LIMITED OPPORTUNITY—one soldier daily. III. UPON A CLASS OF MIND AND HEART NOT EASILY IMPRESSED, viz., the guard which had charge of him, a prisoner. IV. THROUGHOUT THE CITY—notwithstanding the restraints of “his own hired house.” V. REACHING THE FURTHER FIELD, by first fully cultivating the one at hand. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *The furtherance of the gospel*:—Progress—the figure is perhaps military. As the progress of armies is facilitated by the cutting down of obstructing trees, so trials were but the means of cutting down all hindrances to the onward march of the truth. (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*) *Hindrances as helps*:—The Boers’ determined opposition to Livingstone’s purpose to evangelize by native teachers occasioned his continued efforts to penetrate westward until he crossed the continent, and committed himself fully to his great life-work as a missionary explorer. (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *Unfavourable circumstances may be turned to advantage*:—In one place near the Hospice of St. Bernard, I met with a curious natural conservatory. The under surface of the snow having been melted by the warmth of the soil, which in Alpine regions is always markedly higher than that of the air, was not in contact with it. A snowy vault was thus formed, glazed on the top with thin plates of transparent ice; and here grew a most lovely cushion of the *Aretia Helvetica*, covered with hundreds of its delicate rosy flowers, like a miniature hydrangea blossom. The dark colour of the soil favoured the absorption of heat; and, prisoned in its crystal cave, this little fairy grew and blossomed securely from the very heart of winter, the unfavourable circumstances around all seeming so many ministers of good, increasing its strength, and enhancing its loveliness. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The advantage of disadvantage*:—I never had in all my life so great an inlet into the Word of God as now. Those Scriptures that I saw nothing in before are made in this place and state to shine upon me. I have seen that here which I am persuaded I shall never in this world be able to express. (*John Bunyan, in Bedford Jail.*) *Character of St. Paul’s captivity*:—The degree of restraint put upon a person labouring under a

criminal charge was determined by various circumstances: by the nature of the charge itself, by the rank and reputation of the accused, by the degree of guilt presumed to attach to him. Those most leniently dealt with were handed over to their friends, who thus became sureties for their appearance; the worst offenders were thrown into prison and loaded with chains. The captivity of St. Paul was neither the severest nor the lightest possible. By his appeal to Cæsar he had placed himself at the emperor's disposal. Accordingly on his arrival at Rome he is delivered over to the prefect of the prætorians under whose charge he remained throughout his captivity. He represents himself as strictly a prisoner; he speaks again and again of his bonds. At times he mentions his coupling chain. According to Roman custom he was bound by the hand to the soldier who guarded him, and was never left alone day or night. As the soldiers would relieve guard in constant succession, the prætorians one by one were brought into communication with the prisoner of Jesus Christ, and thus he was able to affirm that his bonds had borne witness to the gospel "throughout the imperial regiment." On the other hand his confinement was not so severe as this, standing alone, might seem to imply. It is certain that all had free access to him, and that he was allowed to converse and write without restraint. He was not thrown into prison, but lived in rooms of his own. When he first arrived he was taken to temporary lodgings: either to a house of public entertainment, or to the abode of some friend. But afterwards he rented a dwelling of his own, and there he remained apparently till his release. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) Who could see without emotion that venerable form subjected by iron links to the coarse control of the soldier who stood beside him? How often must the tears of the assembly have been called forth by the upraising of that fettered hand, and the clanking of the chain which checked its energetic action! (*Conybeare and Howson.*) *Good out of evil:*—The cloud, while it obscures the sun, sends down the fertilizing shower. This theatre was prepared for his punishment, and it became the scene of his triumph. This persecution, which was intended to cover him with shame, overwhelmed him with honour; it was to blacken and wither his name, and it rendered it illustrious in the first city and in the most superb court in the universe. Oh the vanity of the thoughts of the wicked! Oh the admirable wisdom of the providence of God! He causes the Jew to open the apostle's mouth, when he thinks that he is closing it, and makes him spread his voice throughout the world, in desiring to banish him from Judea. He had formerly conducted Joseph to the highest pitch of glory in the same way, through the fury of his unnatural brethren. Persecution, slavery, and imprisonment had also been as it were the ladders to his prosperity. Since then He has always in the same way used them in the conduct of His people, overthrowing the designs of His enemies, and turning the artifices of their malice, and the excess of their fury, directly contrary to their intentions; multiplying His Church by the deaths and massacres which seemed likely to destroy it; lighting His gospel by those very means which appeared likely to extinguish it; and drawing the brightest glory of His servants from their deepest disgrace. (*J. Daillé.*)

Ver. 15. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife.—Observe—I. A GOOD ACT MAY BE PROMPTED BY A BAD MOTIVE. II. THE GOOD REMAINS THOUGH THE OBJECT FAILS. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Motives*—I. VARY WIDELY. II. DO NOT AFFECT THE NATURE BUT THE MORAL QUALITY OF AN ACTION. III. DETERMINE NOT THE RESULT BUT THE REWARD. (*Ibid.*) The text suggests—I. DIVERSE DEVELOPEMENT OF HUMAN DISPOSITION. II. THE POSSIBILITY OF DOING A GOOD DEED THROUGH A BAD MOTIVE. III. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ENTIRELY CONCEALING MOTIVES. IV. THE ACTION OF SELF-SEEKERS TURNED INTO THE GOOD MAN'S SOURCE OF JOY. V. MAN IS NEVER SO DIABOLIZED AS WHEN MAKING A GOOD CAUSE THE MEANS OF GRIEVING AND TORMENTING THE CHURCH. VI. THE MERE FACT THAT A MAN PREACHES CHRIST IS NOT A PROOF OF HIS PERSONAL SALVATION: and if this can be affirmed of preaching, how much more may it be affirmed of learning. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Two voices on the same subject:*—I. The voice of SELFISHNESS. II. The voice of LOVE. (*Ibid.*) *The real and counterfeit in the Christian ministry:*—I. WHERE THEY CORRESPOND. 1. Both adopt the Christian name. 2. Both utter the same shibboleth. 3. Both are active in preaching Christ. II. WHERE THEY DIFFER. 1. In heart. "Contention" moves the one; "love" reigns in the other. 2. In spirit. "Envy and strife" move the one; "good will" actuates the other. 3. In source of strength. Love of party animates the one; confidence in the Lord emboldens the other. 4. In aim. That of the one is to advance, it may be, a lifeless Church; that of the other to propel the

gospel of Christ. 5. The depth and accuracy of conviction. The one "supposing to add," &c. (ver. 16); the other "knowing that," &c. (ver. 17). (*G. G. Ballard.*)

spurious ministry.—I. THE ELEMENTS FORMATIVE OF IT. 1. An imperfect apprehension of Christ's mission. 2. A total absence of Christ's Spirit. 3. Thought and sympathy, narrowed by early prejudice and preconceived ideas. 4. Christ made subservient to the doctrines, ritual, and history of a system. II. THE RESULTS INSEPARABLE FROM IT. 1. The cross degraded into a rallying-point for party strife. 2. The basest spirit indulged under the pretence of fulfilling a sacred office. (1) "Envy"—displeasure at another's good. (2) "Strife"—selfish rivalry which seeks to gain the good belonging to another. 3. Christ preached merely to advance a party. 4. Zeal for propagating a creed, greater than to save a lost world. III. THE GERM OF IT. 1. May exist in those who zealously preach Christ. 2. Consists in a moral contradiction between the heart of the preacher and the theme of his discourse—contentiousness and Christ. 3. Produces impurity of motive in Christian work—"not sincerely." 4. Biases the judgment to expect results which are never realized—"supposing." 5. Inspires aims which are unchristian—"to add affliction." (*Ibid.*) *The preaching of Christ.*—I. THE THEME. His person and work—His grace and power—His gifts and promises—His example and requirements. II. THE MOTIVE. Sometimes impure; as sectarian, mercenary, ambitious—sometimes sincere; from love to God and man. III. THE RESULT. Some good every way—Christ is exalted—the faithful rejoice. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) 1. THE PREACHING OF CHRIST. No preaching can bear this designation which does not constitute Him the grand object of it. From the first the holy men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit pointed to Him. All the Scriptures lead, remotely, perhaps, but certainly, to the Cross of Christ. He is to be preached as the only object of faith, and the sole source of salvation. Opposition must not hinder, nor heresy divert this. II. THE SCALE ON WHICH CHRIST IS TO BE PREACHED. 1. To all peoples—Philippians and Romans, Europeans and Africans. 2. By men of all views and denominations, Jewish and Gentile Christians; Roman Catholics and Protestants; Anglicans and Dissenters, &c. III. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THIS SHOULD BE RECEIVED. There are two classes interested. 1. Ministers should rejoice when they see the gospel spreading on all sides and among all denominations. Let it not be said of them, "Ye know not what spirit ye are off." No jealous or envious feeling at others' successes should be cherished by them. 2. Congregations while loyal to their own Church should put a generous construction on the work of others. IV. THE GLORIOUS RESULTS ARISING OUT OF THIS. 1. In time. 2. In eternity. (*W. B. Collyer, D.D.*) *Toleration.*—I. We see here the TRUE GROUND OF CHRISTIAN TOLERATION. 1. Negatively. (1) Toleration is not an enforced forbearance with men who teach error. Some keep their hands off errorists because they cannot touch them; like boys who will not pluck ripe fruit because there is a high wall in the way. (2) Nor is it a recognition of the right of men to freedom of thought and experience, which is only part of it. (3) Still less is it indifference to error. There are men who do not care whether you teach God or Jupiter, heathen mythology or Christian theology. 2. Positively. It is a generous confidence in the vitality of truth and its ultimate victory, born of hope, nursed by courage, adopted by love. II. IF PAUL'S SPIRIT BE RIGHT THEN WE NEED TO AMEND OUR VIEW OF SOCIAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY. He saw bad men taking his place yet he let them go on, rejoiced in their work, though not in the motive of it. Had he lived in our day he would have been told, "You cannot afford to sit in a Church where these men teach or you will be responsible for their teaching." He would have replied, "Who made you a judge; to their own master they stand or fall." Every man is responsible for his own conduct and belief to God. If I please to work with men who are heretical on some points of theology, but who are right in the point in which I work with them (Unitarian temperance reformers, *e.g.*), I am not responsible for their wrong beliefs, but only for that part which I take. Paul was grieved at the amount of error that was in these men, but the small amount of truth he saw pleased him more. III. THIS CHRISTIAN TOLERATION FOUNDED IN FAITH AND LOVE, LEADS TO THE REAL AND ONLY REAL UNION POSSIBLE TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. External formulas are not unimportant, but there never will be Christian union in this world until men feel that the invisible, spiritual elements of truth, the interior experience of soul, are transcendently more important than the idea forms, or the government forms, or the worship forms of the Church. Humanity is our common bond outside; why should not Christianity be within? "Let every man be fully persuaded in

his own mind. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Love of Christ and the brethren the essential qualification for preaching Christ*.—I. IT GIVES IMPULSE TO ALL TRUE MOTIVE POWER. From this sprung their "good will." II. IT IS KEEN IN PERCEIVING, EVEN IN CHAINS, THE WILL OF GOD. "Knowing that I am set." III. IT IS QUICK IN CO-OPERATING TO ACCOMPLISH THE WILL OF GOD WHEN KNOWN. IV. IT BINDS THE HEART IN SYMPATHY TO ALL WHO SUFFER IN THE DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL. V. IT IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE THAT MEN CAN WIELD FOR THE GOSPEL'S TRIUMPH. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *The preaching of Christ a reason for joy and holy exultation*.—I. Let us inquire WHAT THE APOSTLE INTENDED BY THE PREACHING OF CHRIST.

1. The exhibition of Jesus as the Messiah sent to save a guilty world. (1) Such a messenger had been set forth by prophecy and types from the beginning. (2) He was exhibited as truly human, sinless, Divine. 2. The publication of His great work, and ultimate design in visiting this world. (1) To atone for sin. (2) To confer eternal life. 3. The assertion of His claims on all mankind. (1) To their love. (2) To their obedience. II. GLORIOUS AS THIS THEME IS, YET MANY PREACH IT FROM CORRUPT MOTIVES. 1. Some for gain—money, position, influence. 2. Some for victory in a controversial battle. 3. Yet if Christ is really preached, whatever may be the condemnation of the preacher, Christ's end will be secured.

III. THE REASONS WHY THE PREACHING OF CHRIST, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, IS A JUST OCCASION FOR HOLY JOY. 1. By this means the enemies of Christ are made to bear unequivocal testimony to His dignity and glory, and to promote the interests of truth without intending it: as the heathen writers quoted by Paul, and the devils' confession of Christ. 2. As the world can only be renovated by the preaching of Christ, so even His enemies who preach Him contribute to this event. Think of the heathen world; the acceptance of Christ in any sense and from any hands cannot but better it. 3. We may be assured that God will certainly overrule the preaching of Christ, even by wicked men, to accomplish His purpose of mercy. In much inferior matters God controls the movements of bad men for His own glory. He did so in the case of Judas. Is it not then correct to argue that if God subordinates the malignity, ambition, and haughtiness of men to the accomplishment of His providential purposes, He will also overrule them to serve His designs of mercy? Witness the Reformation under Henry VIII. Application: 1. Our cause for rejoicing is exceedingly great. Notwithstanding there are many parts where the gospel is imperfectly preached, yet there are thousands of holy men who preach Christ from the purest motives. 2. Let us manifest our gratitude to Him who is preached by a more lively zeal in His cause. 3. Let us who love Christ draw into closer union with one another. If we allow bickering and strife while Christ's cause may prosper we shall be ruined. 4. Let the despondent be encouraged—anyhow Christ is preached. The gospel is advancing in spite of our fears. (*Isaac Mann, M.A.*) *Allowable contention*.—God grant that we may contend with other Churches as the vine with the olive—which of us shall bear the best fruit; but not as the briar with the thistle, which of us will be the most unprofitable. (*Lord Bacon.*) *An imprisoned preacher's thoughts*.—Paul was imprisoned for preaching the gospel, and was persecuted by them who but for him would not have had a gospel to preach.

1. The apostle had, by nature, a temper that could not bear very much being abused. He was naturally sensitive and aggressive. In prison and helpless no doubt there were slight heavings of the old volcano at the conduct of his opponents. Moreover his conscience was an inspired one, and he must have felt, "Who is a judge of orthodoxy if I am not?" Did he then rouse the alarm and denounce these preachers of envy and strife? No, he rejoiced where few could have rejoiced, viz., in prison, and at what few could have rejoiced, viz., that his enemies were doing good. 2. Paul might have felt that his life was thrown away, that God had need of him. Many feel that everything must be done, and that there is none to do it but themselves. Paul had a right to feel so if any man had. But the thought never seems to have occurred to him. No doubt he felt the cowardliness and the cruelty of these men, but the feeling was swallowed up in the reflection that they were doing his work when he could not do it himself. 3. Paul held that so precious is this truth of Jesus that no man can present even a particle of it that is not worth presenting. You cannot preach Christ so that it is not worth while to have preached Him thus. It is better that He should be preached by bad men for bad purposes than not preached at all. 4. It would have been enough in Paul to have said less than he did, such as "I trust all will be for the best. I hope it will do some good, but I fear it will do much harm. Of course I cannot associate with them." On the contrary he exults over

the certain good of the issue. The hounds of love are better than the hounds of theology to hunt heretics with. How painful not to know the difference between conscience and combativeness. 5. Consider in a few deductions the temptations to which men who are working for religious ends are liable. I. THE DANGER OF SUBSTITUTING ACTIVITY FOR THE LOVING GRACES. The bee that goes buzzing about the flowers in the spring is very useful; but, after all, I think the flowers, that never stir or buzz, are full as interesting and far more important. The buzzing bee gets a good deal of honey, but he would not get a particle if it were not for the silent flowers which contain it all. There is a great peril of an external rattling activity leaving the heart cold, mechanical, and even malevolent. II. THE DANGER OF ARROGANCE. 1. There are a great many people who say that all Churches must be constituted, work, and believe as their own. 2. Many of us have got beyond that, but how many of us can rejoice in the Church whose services has swallowed up ours. But all that Paul wanted was that work should be done, whoever did it; and even rejoiced that others would have the credit for the work he did. Conclusion: From the beginning until to-day the power of preaching has been and henceforth will be, not in ideas but in disposition. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The motives of Paul's enemies*:—I. It may be that THE ENEMIES OF THE APOSTLE HOPED THAT THEIR PREACHING WOULD IRRITATE NERO and his officers against Christianity, and that, offended at this new increase which this doctrine had received, they would quickly discharge their anger upon a prisoner, who was the principal support of this growing religion, either by putting him to death suddenly or by condemning him to some more grievous trouble than his present prison. II. It may be that envy had inspired them with the thought, that BY LABOURING IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL THEY SHOULD OBTAIN A PART OF THE APOSTLE'S GLORY, and that by making good use of the time of his imprisonment, to establish themselves in the minds of the disciples, they should by degrees take away the credit and authority which he possessed; and judging of him by themselves, they imagined that it would be an immense increase to his affliction to see them thus enriched and decorated with his spoils. Such or such like were the thoughts of these wretched men. Judge by this what is the nature of vice, and how horrible its impudence in daring thus to profane the most sacred things, and to abuse them so vilely for its own ungodly purpose. Thus Satan sometimes clothes himself as an angel of light to further the works of darkness. From which you see that it is not enough that our actions be good and praiseworthy, if our intentions are not pure and upright. It is to profane the good to do it with a bad end in view. 2. See how the thoughts of vice are not only impudent, but even foolish and vain. These deceivers, judging of St. Paul by themselves, believed that their preaching would vex him. Poor creatures! how little you knew of this high-minded man, to imagine that so small a thing could trouble him! (*J. Dailly.*) *Christ preached by love*:—I once asked a distinguished artist what place he gave to labour in art. "Labour," he said, in effect, "is the beginning, the middle, and the end of art." Turning then to another—"And you," I inquired, "what do you consider the great force in art?" "Love," he replied. In their two answers I found but one truth. (*Boree.*) *Evangelical congratulation*:—How Paul would have rejoiced had he been living now. The ministry at Rome must have been on a comparatively insignificant scale. But for every man who preached the gospel then thousands are preaching it now. Why should there have been such rejoicing in connection with the preaching of Christ crucified. I. Because thereby THE RENOVATION OF FALLEN MAN IS INTELLIGENTLY PROPOSED. 1. High time, by common consent, something was done in that direction, and many are the projects suggested for it. (1) Give the people a sound secular education. (2) Give them remunerative employment. (3) Confer upon them honourable enfranchisement. (4) Take care to raise them into better and more civilized habits by better dwellings, food, &c. (5) Educate their tastes, open museums and art galleries. 2. Can you look at these laudable secondary considerations without marking their fatal defect? They deal with man externally and say not a word about his internal renovation. If you leave a man's heart untouched there is that there which will laugh all your culture to scorn. If his heart be right all will be right, but not otherwise. 3. The gospel aims at making the heart right, and succeeds wherever it is accepted. II. Because thereby THE RENOVATION IS GRACIOUSLY GUARANTEED. 1. With the preaching of Christ God has formally connected the exertion of His power. "With God all things are possible." The preacher is a fellow-worker with God. 2. With this preaching God has been pleased to associate the accomplishment of His purposes.

3. He has identified with preaching the manifestation of His sympathies. (*W. Brock, D.D.*) *Good-will.*—*Good-will the spirit common to the brotherhood of the Christian ministry*:—I. It is GOD-LIKE. 1. The spirit characteristic of all God's will towards men. 2. The spirit manifested by His Son. 3. The spirit of the gospel message. II. It is YIELDED TO AN HONOURED BROTHER. 1. To him as a man—his character, aims, and life. 2. To his labours in the cause of Christ. 3. To his future success. (*G. G. Ballard.*) *The defence of the gospel*:—I. IS NECESSARY. It has many powerful, malignant enemies. II. IS IMPERATIVE upon its professors, whether ministers or people. III. MUST BE MAINTAINED IN LOVE to the truth, its advocates, and even its opponents. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Observe*—I. THE CAUSE TO BE DEFENDED. II. THE OPPOSITION TO WHICH IT IS EXPOSED. III. THE MEANS OF ITS DEFENCE. IV. THE PERSONS WHO OUGHT TO DEFEND IT. (*Ibid.*) *The opponents of St. Paul*:—In the Corinthian Church there was a party that said, "I am of Cephas"—followers of the apostle of the circumcision, and hostile to those who named themselves from Paul. It is very probable that this Petrine party held high views about the law; but there is no hint in the Epistle to the Corinthians that they either held or taught such mischievous errors as were propagated in Galatia. Minor matters of ceremonial seem rather to have occupied them (chap. viii. 10). But there is no question that the apostle's authority was impugned in Corinth, and in all likelihood by the Petrine party, because he had not been personally called by Jesus as Simon had been; and by the same party his right to pecuniary support from the Churches seems to have been denied or disputed. While therefore there was comparative purity in the section that took Peter for its head and watchword; there was also keen and resolute opposition to the person and prerogative of the Apostle to the Gentiles. To meet all the requirements of the case before us we have only to suppose that such a party was formed at Rome, and Rom. xiv. seems to indicate their existence. If there was a company of believing Jews, who held the essential doctrines of the gospel, but was combative on points of inferior value, and in connection with the social institutions of their people, and who at the same time were bitter and unscrupulous antagonists of the apostle, from such an impression of his opinions as is indicated by James in Acts xxi. 20-21, then such a party might preach Christ, and yet cherish towards St. Paul all those feelings of envy and ill-will he ascribes to them. Chrysostom touches the truth when he says they were jealous of the apostle. Calvin writes feelingly, "Paul says nothing here which I myself have not experienced. For there are men living now who have preached the gospel with no other design than to gratify the rage of the wicked by persecuting pious pastors." (*Prof. Eadie.*) *Paul's joy in the preaching of his enemies*:—Paul's example is a rebuke to the excessive ecclesiastical spirit. He saw something good in the worst men who preached. Modern precisionists see the worst in the best men. Paul looked on the good side. Modern orthodoxy is disposed always to look on the bad side. If a vase was cracked, Paul turned it round and looked upon the side where it was not cracked. If a vase is cracked, we are disposed to turn it round and look on the side where the crack comes. Paul would certainly rather have men preach Christ that loved Christ; but rather than that Christ should not be preached he was willing that those who did not love Him should preach. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ really though inadequately preached*:—The rising sun in the morning brings ten thousand noxious insects to life, brings miasma from the morass, and sets disease flying through the land; nevertheless, in spite of malaria, and in spite of all venomous insects that then begin to move, and in spite of all mischiefs which waking men begin to perform, it is infinitely better that the sun should rise, and that these evils should take place, than that it should be everlastingly dark. It was better to have Christ preached by bad men than not at all. It was better to have the gospel imperfectly delivered than not to have it made known in any way, or only to a limited extent. The truth preached with manifold and manifest error is a thousand times better than none at all. While the full and symmetrical truth as it is in Jesus will do far more good, and good of a far higher type, than any fragmentary views, yet such is the vitality and power of Christian truth, that its very fragments are potent for good. One may stand before an ample glass, long and broad, which reflects the whole figure, and the whole room, giving every part in proportion and in relation. Break that mirror into a thousand fragments, and each one of these pieces will give back to you your face; and though the amplitude of view and the relations of objects are gone, yet the smallest fragment, in its nature and uses, is a mirror still, and you can see your face withal. A full Christ

reflects men, time, and immortality; but let error shatter the celestial glass, and its fragments, reduced in value, do in part some of that work which the whole did; and they are precious. (*Ibid.*) *The preaching of Christ by whatever lips a source of satisfaction to Christians*:—"You (Scotch commissioners and Presbyterian clergy after Dunbar) say that you have just cause to regret that men of civil employments should usurp the calling of the ministry to the scandal of the Reformed Kirks. Are you troubled that Christ is preached? Is preaching so exclusively your function? I thought the covenant and those professors of it could have been willing that any should speak good of the name of Christ; if not it is no covenant of God's approving." (*Oliver Cromwell.*) *Power of the Bible even in faulty versions*:—"A railway man asked for a genuine Catholic Bible, as he was not allowed to read a heretical version like Luther's. "Here is the book you want," said the colporteur, handing him a Van Ess copy. "Yes; that is the book," said the man, after looking at it well. That happened a few weeks ago, and now Jesus is his All, and he finds the same grand truths about Him, whether he takes Luther's translation or Van Ess's. God's Word shall not return void to Him. (*Anstera.*) *Power of Christ preached*:—"The surest way of turning a person from one pleasure is to give him a greater pleasure on the opposite side. A weeping willow planted by a pond in a pleasure-garden turns all to one side in its growth, and that the side on which the water lies. No dealing with its roots or with its branches will avail to change its attitude; but place a larger expanse of water on the opposite side, and the tree will turn spontaneously and hang the other way. So must man's heart be won. (*William Arnot.*) *The influence of the gospel*:—"This is the weapon that has won victories over hearts of every kind, in every quarter of the globe. Greenlanders, Africans, South Sea Islanders, Hindoos, and Chinese, have all alike felt its power. Just as that huge iron tube, which crosses the Menai Straits, is more affected and bent by half an hour's sunshine than by all the dead weight that can be placed in it, so in like manner the hearts of savages have melted before the Cross when every other argument seemed to move them no more than if they had been stones. (*Bp. Ryle.*)

Ver. 19. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation.—Mark—I. THE CONFIDENCE OF THE DECLARATION—"I know." Not an angel could utter a truer note of triumph. Righteousness is a prophetic power. The good man can infallibly predict the issue of moral operation. II. THE GROUND OF THIS CONFIDENCE. "This shall turn," viz., the preaching of Christ. His joy does not arise from the fact that certain persons preached, but from the higher fact that Christ was preached; not that bad men were working, but that a good work was being done. III. THE EXTENSION OF THE TRUTH IS THE BEST GUARANTEE OF PERSONAL HAPPINESS. A man of less moral grandeur would have started the argument from himself. Let me be free and then the gospel shall triumph; but he knew nothing of such self-idolatry. He said Christ shall be preached, and Christ's servants in due time shall be free. When it goes well with the Master it goes well with the servant. IV. THE GOSPEL HAS EVERYTHING TO HOPE FROM BEING ALLOWED TO REVEAL ITS OWN CREDENTIALS. Proclaim it—ministers, teachers; it sounds well from any lips—philosophers, babes and sucklings, unlearned. By whomsoever pronounced, the celestial fire will strike through every syllable. V. THE GREATEST MAN IN THE CHURCH MAY BE SERVED BY THE SUPPLICATION OF THE GOOD. The apostle associates his salvation with the prayer of the Philippians. No man is so far advanced as to be beyond the range of prayer. Here a child is of value. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Salvation and its means*:—"I. THE SALVATION PROVIDED BY CHRIST IS RADICALLY A SPIRITUAL SALVATION. It extends indeed to all the elements of our nature, being an emancipation of the whole man from the bondage of death; but the condition of the body follows that of the soul. In a sense we enter into spiritual salvation at conversion, for "he that believeth hath everlasting life." But the word is generally applied to the state of perfect purity and beauty and blessedness for the whole nature which the day of Christ will bring in. II. ALL GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL DEALINGS WITH HIS PEOPLE ARE INTENDED TO BE A TRAINING FOR SALVATION, whether pleasant or like Paul's at Rome, "not joyous but grievous," a discipline fitted to ripen the flower of holy character, which will be fully opened in its glorious beauty in heaven. III. BY THE MEASURE IN WHICH WE AVAIL OURSELVES OF THIS TRAINING OUR SALVATION WILL BE AFFECTED. 1. All who reach heaven will be perfectly happy up to the full measure of their capacities, because being "pure in heart," they will "see God" as fully as their natures can see Him. 2. But the eyes of those who availed them-

selves but little of the light of truth, who looked at God but seldom, will be able to look at Him only from far; whilst those whose eyes have been much accustomed to the light here, will stand in the foremost circles, and there with ravished hearts gaze on the infinite glory. Some will have an abundant entrance, while others will be saved only as "through fire." IV. Remembering these things, WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT WE TO BE. 1. In all holy conversation and godliness. 2. In prayer and effort. 3. So that the Divine training may "turn to our salvation." V. How THEN SHALL WE OBTAIN THIS SPIRITUAL PROFIT? 1. Through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. (1) He originates and supports spiritual life; clears away the mists of prejudice; opens the eyes to guilty self and merciful God; dwells in the regenerate. (2) The figures under which His influence is set forth describe His action; "fire" to burn up the chaff within us, and to light up in our souls the genial flame of love; water to cleanse pollution and to quench thirst; unction to consecrate. 2. This supply is obtained largely through the Church's prayer. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) *The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ:—I. THE SUPPLY.* The Holy Spirit is the sole agent of the Saviour's will in the inward work of grace; nor is the indwelling and operation of Christ ever mentioned without the accompaniment of this truth. Not that the Spirit is supplied merely as an influence; He is both the Giver and the Gift; just as the Saviour is the Victim and Priest. The gospel is a ministration of the Spirit by the Spirit, and the apostle hopes for the supply to his soul of all that grace which the Spirit, the Keeper of Christ's treasury, has to bestow. II. THE PRAYER. He relies on the Philippians' intercessions, answering to those he always offered for them (ver. 4). It is simply His most graceful way of asking them to pray for him—not simply with reference to the official work of the gospel, but to the good of his own soul. Mutual prayer is bound up with the very essence of the Christian system. III. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO. He seems to place himself between them and his Lord. The Spirit of Jesus flows unto him in proportion as the prayers of his fellow Christians and his own flow out towards Him in supplication. We are what the supply of the Saviour's Spirit makes us; that is the measure of our life, strength, perception of truth, performance of duty, and attainment in grace. But that is dependent on individual and common prayer; and the prayer for the Spirit is offered through the same Spirit in whom as well as for whom we pray. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *The ministers' plea:—I. THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH.* 1. In reference to Paul. (1) He expected to be prayed for. He does not ask for, but assumes that he has their prayers. Would that all pastors could assume as much. Some are rich in this, but some terribly poor. (2) He valued the prayers of the saints. He was an apostle, but could not do without them; how much more we. (3) He looked for great results from them. He wanted them all the more because his troubles were heavier than usual; so do ministers in these evil days. 2. In reference particularly to ministers. (1) They may justly claim the prayers of their brethren. (a) To help them in their duties, so that they may be made effectual. (b) They are burdened with remarkable responsibilities. (c) They have an experience singular to themselves. (d) They have subtle, numerous, and peculiar temptations—pride; despondency. (e) They have many discouragements. (2) The prayers which are wanted are those of the entire Church. From some other labour some of you might be exempted, but not from this. (a) Of all who profit by our ministry. If you feed upon the Word pray that others may do so; if you don't, do not unkindly speak of it everywhere, but tell the Lord about it. (b) Of converts. (c) Of the aged with their experience, and the young with their freshness. (d) Of the absent through sickness, &c. How effective the ministry of the helpless who can yet pray. (3) The prayers of God's people ought to go up for their minister in many forms. (a) It should be daily work. (b) If we expect a blessing on our families through the ministry, we should as families ask God to bless it. (c) Then there are our prayer-meetings, &c. (d) There should be especial prayer by each Christian at home before every service. (4) These prayers, to be good for anything, will be attended with consistent lives. II. THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT. 1. The Spirit we want is—(1) The Spirit who rested on Christ. (2) The Spirit, the Comforter, who represents Christ. 2. This Spirit is essential to every true minister. All other gifts, however desirable, may be dispensed with, but for the conversion of souls this is the one essential. (1) The preacher must be taught of the Spirit, else how shall he speak? (2) He must be inflamed by the Spirit. (3) He must have the unction of the Spirit. 3. The supply of the Spirit is essential to the edification of the Church of God. To build up a church. (1) Light is needed. (2) Love. (3) Hol-

ness. (4) Zeal. 4. For the conversion of sinners. Who can enlighten the blind eye, quicken the dead soul, but the Spirit? 5. For the progress of the gospel and the victory of truth. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *The relation between prayer and the supply of the Spirit*:—I believe in the efficacy of united prayer, but each one must pray. There would be no clouds unless the drop of dew from each blade of grass were exhale by the sun. Each drop ascending in vapour falls again in the blessed shower which removes the drought. So the grace that trembles upon each one of you must exhale in prayer, and a blessing will come down upon the Church of God. (*Ibid.*) *The necessity of the Spirit in spiritual work*:—There is an old Romish story, that a certain famous preacher was to preach on a certain occasion, but he missed his way and was too late, and the devil knowing of it put on the appearance of the minister, took his place, and preached a sermon to the people, who supposed they were listening to the famous divine whom they had expected. The devil preached upon hell, and was very much at home, so that he delivered a marvellous sermon, in which he exhorted persons to escape from the wrath to come. As he was finishing his sermon, in came the preacher himself, and the devil was obliged to resume his own form. The holy man then questioned him, "How dare you preach as you have done, warning men to escape from hell?" "Oh," said the devil, "it will do no hurt to my kingdom, for I have no unction." The story is grotesque, but the truth is in it. The same sermon may be preached and the same words uttered, but without unction there is nothing in it. The unction of the Holy One is true power; therefore, brethren, we need your prayers that we may obtain the supply of the Spirit upon our ministry; for otherwise it will lack unction, which will amount to lacking heart and soul. It will be a dead ministry, and how can a dead ministry be of any service to the people of God? (*Ibid.*) *Prayer for ministers*:—John Livingston of Scotland once spent a whole night with a company of his brethren in prayer for God's blessing, all of them together besieging the throne; and the next day, under his sermon, five hundred souls were converted. All the world has heard how the audience of the elder Pres. Edwards was moved by his terrible sermon on "Sinners in the hands of an Angry God;" some of them even grasping hold of the pillars of the sanctuary, from feeling that their feet were actually sliding into the pit. But the secret of that sermon's power is known to but very few. Some Christians in that vicinity (Enfield, Mass.) had become alarmed, lest while God was blessing other places, He should in anger pass them by; and so they met on the evening preceding the preaching of that sermon, and spent the whole of the night in agonizing prayer. (Dr. H. C. Fish.) *Cheerfulness in trial*:—At a certain period the Methodist Society in Dublin was greatly agitated by divisions. A good but very anxious brother wrote to Mr. Wesley on the subject, told him the real state of things, deplored it exceedingly, and concluded his communication by inquiring, "Where, sir, are all these things to end?" The venerable Wesley replied: "Dear brother, you ask where are all these things to end?" "Why, in glory to God in the highest," to be sure; "and on earth peace, and good will among men." (*Anecdotes of the Wesleys.*) *Benefit of trial*:—It is rough work that polishes. Look at the pebbles on the shore! Far inland, where some arm of the sea thrusts itself deep into the bosom of the land, and expanding into a salt loch, lies girdled by the mountains, sheltered from the storms that agitate the deep, the pebbles on the beach are rough, not beautiful; angular, not rounded. It is where long white lines of breakers roar, and the rattling shingle is rolled about on the strand, that its pebbles are rounded and polished. As in nature, as in the arts, so in grace; it is rough treatment that gives souls as well as stones their lustre; the more the diamond is cut the brighter it sparkles; and in what seems hard dealing, there God has no end in view but to perfect His people's graces. (T. Guthrie, D.D.)

Ver. 20. According to my earnest expectation and my hope.—Paul's expectation:—I. PAUL HAD AN EXPECTATION. 1. This seems natural if we regard his character and temper. (1) He was a warm-hearted man, an intellectual man, a man, moreover, whose natural gifts had not been cramped but had a healthy development, and who had healthy cravings. While he did not think more highly of himself than he ought, neither did he think more meanly. (2) He was a born leader, not fitted for service so much as for rule: finding few or none with dignity enough to compel his homage. A man of ambition, with a splendid secular career before him. 2. When Jesus spoke to him Paul found a Master, and at once a new object of expectation and hope was found. II. THE EXPECTATION WAS THAT CHRIST

WOULD BE MAGNIFIED IN HIM. 1. Notice the change of self-estimate. Had Paul joined some secular cause he would have regarded himself as conferring a favour: but when he joined the Church he only congratulated himself on finding mercy. This self-abnegation was because he found Christ all in all. 2. He expected that Christ would be magnified in his body: it seems more natural for us to think his spirit. But the body is the manifestation of the spirit. In the spirit Christ is felt, in the body He is seen. If the life is degraded Christ is not in the spirit. 3. He expected that Christ would be magnified in his body irrespective of time or circumstance, life or death. Christ's grace is sufficient for this. III. OF THIS EXPECTATION HE WAS NOT ASHAMED BUT ENTERTAINED IT BOLDLY. 1. Some Christians feel ashamed of a bold, vigorous magnification of Christ. "What will the world say?" 2. Some Christians feel afraid to magnify Christ. "What will the world do?" (*A. J. Bamford, B.A.*) *Paul's Expectation*:—I. "EXPECTATION" AND "HOPE" ARE WORDS WHICH CONNECT THE HEART WITH THE FUTURE. II. NO POWER CAN SO LIGHT UP THE FUTURE, AND THROW OVER IT THE HUES OF IMMORTAL BEAUTY AS CHILDLIKE TRUST IN GOD. III. THE UNEXPECTANT AND HOPELESS MAN IS LIVING ONLY HALF A LIFE; but he who is living on false hopes and expectations is wasting life. IV. IT IS RIGHT THAT THE BODY SHOULD BE TURNED TO MORAL ACCOUNT. Christ purchased the whole man. The passions are not to have their own wild way. The blood is not to be the master of the man. V. THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING READY FOR LIFE OR DEATH. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Christ magnified*:—1. Every bad man is an injury to creation. God may, it is true, overrule this for the general good. If an unholy man has been of any service he has been made so in spite of himself; he never designed it or desired it. If he has, like a lighthouse, served as a warning to others, that is God's work. Every good man is useful and aims to be. But how is a good man to be useful. I. BY MAGNIFYING CHRIST. 1. Christ is the most splendid object in existence. (1) He is highly thought of in heaven. There He is seen as He is. (2) He is highly thought of in hell. The destruction of the lost comes from His presence and glory. (2) But while heaven and hell in different ways acknowledge the greatness of Christ there are men on earth who entertain the lowest thoughts of Him, although it was on earth that He displayed His love. But there is a rapidly increasing number who count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Him. 2. While speaking of magnifying Christ it is proper to be reminded that there are some who do all they can to diminish Him. (1) Such are they who deny him. (2) But there are some who injure Christ though they deny Him not. They lessen Him as to the Divine dignity of His person, the magnitude of His work, the merits of His sacrifice. (3) There are those who magnify themselves under the pretence of magnifying Christ. 3. But while some dishonour Christ there are others who magnify Him. How? (1) Not by making Christ appear greater than He is—that is impossible. The highest created mind has never yet conceived that He is so great as He is. (2) Not by a thoughtless chiming upon His name or by the use of a few phraseologies; but—(3) By receiving in the letter the truths respecting His incarnation, teaching, death, &c., and the spirit of those truths which give brightness to the intellect, love of righteousness to the heart, vigour and grace to the character, and bind the soul to the Infinite. 4. It was thus that Paul magnified Christ. Not only was the Christian system as a whole confirmed in Him, but its distinguishing doctrines. (1) That God is willing to pardon the chief of sinners. (2) That the power of God can make the greatest sinner ask for mercy. (3) That by the grace of God the greatest sinner may find mercy and be transformed into the greatest saint, apostle, missionary. II. IN ORDER TO MAGNIFY CHRIST ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR LIFE MUST BE SUBSERVIENT TO THAT END. 1. Our active services. 2. Our afflictions. 3. Our life and conduct. 4. Our death. (*Caleb Morris.*) *The Saviour magnified in His people*:—I. HOW CHRIST IS MAGNIFIED IN THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE. To magnify is to make great, or to celebrate existing greatness. In the second sense only can Christ be magnified. Christ is magnified—1. In the conversion of His people. 2. In their sanctification. 3. In their devoted labours in His cause. 4. In their trials and sufferings. 5. In the abiding results which their services secure. II. HOW CHRIST IS MAGNIFIED IN THE CHRISTIAN'S DEATH. 1. By raising his soul above the dread which it naturally inspires. 2. By abiding hopes and consolations in his death. 3. Through the influence which his death exerts on those who survive. Conclusion: Our theme ought to lead us—1. To see the power and glory of the Saviour. 2. The characters to whom only the text applies. 3. The grand aim of the Christian ministry. 4. That the Christian need not be painfully anxious about the events

of life. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Christ made great*:—I. HOW IS THIS PRINCIPLE MANIFESTED. As God of course He cannot be made great; only in His mediatorial character. In this He is made great. 1. By God the Father (chap. ii. 10). 2. By the angels. They did so when He was on earth. They do so in heaven. 3. By every individual partaker of His great salvation; by Paul and us. (1) In our firm belief of His vicarious sacrifice. (2) In our self humility. (3) In unshaken confidence. 4. In earnest evangelism. 5. In hopeful death. II. IN WHAT DOES ITS EXCELLENCY APPEAR. 1. This is all men's moral obligation. 2. The greatest moral excellence. 3. The only right principle of action. 4. Because God always honours it. (*N. M. Harry.*) *Earnest expectation*:—Found only here and in Rom. viii. 19. It means the waiting with the head raised, and the eye fixed on that point of the horizon from which the expected object is to come. What a plastic representation! An artist might make a statue of hope out of this Greek term. (*J. Hutchison, D.D.*)

Ver. 21. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—*The apostle's alternative*:—The language is like a great river which, flowing through some country, bends first from the one side and then from the other, and then comes back into its straight course. There is a triple movement of thought and feeling. 1. There is the absorbing devotion which this man has to Christ. 2. Then comes in the bend of the stream; a rock on the margin sends the waters away in another direction. He thinks about others. 3. Then comes the third feeling when he apprehends it to be his duty to stop and work. I. THE FIRST ATTITUDE OF THE APOSTLE'S MIND. Here we get THE GRAND, NOBLE SIMPLICITY AND UNITY OR CONTINUITY OF LIFE AND DEATH to a devout man thinking about himself. 1. Look at the noble theory of life. In all senses in which you can use the words, Christ is this man's life. (1) The secret of its origin, its source, and basis. (2) Its goal and aim. (3) Its law and pattern. My life, if it be in Christ, may become a chain of golden deeds; if I be out of Christ, it is but a heap of unconnected links. 2. Wheresoever life is thus simple and of a piece, death will be gain, continuous and increasing. (1) The direction is the same; he passes the points and gets on to the other line without a shock. (2) The life is simply lifted out of the common atmosphere and plunged, as it were, into an oxygen jar, and it blazes out the more brightly for the change. II. THE SECOND BEND OR REACH. THE HESITATION WHICH ARISES FROM THE CONTEMPLATION OF LIFE AS A FIELD FOR WORK. The broken language of the original expresses the broken waters of the river as it takes the turn. "I am in a strait," like a man hedged up between two walls, not knowing how to turn. Paul was the subject of two counter-attractions, that of death and that of life. 1. Notice how he talks about the former. "I desire to depart," weigh an anchor or lift the pegs of a tent. To be with Christ—that is the attraction. He draws us, and we run after Him. This is no morbid, sentimental desire for death arising out of hatred with life. 2. Then think of that reason for living which overbears the wish for death. "There is work to be done, and so I feel that life tugs at me." How different to many men's clinging to life, because of the judgment after death. III. NOTICE THE BEAUTIFUL CALM SOLUTION OF THE QUESTION—not an equipoise of hesitation, something pulling two different ways, and so the rest of equal forces acting. "I KNOW THAT I SHALL ABIDE AND CONTINUE WITH YOU ALL"—a calm taking what God wills about the matter. Stick to your tasks, and in God's time you will have rest and reward. Conclusion: Here are two theories of life for you. "To live is Christ, and to die is gain." "To live is self, and to die is loss and despair." Which? (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christian life and death*:—I. THE PROPER SCOPE AND CHARACTER OF ALL TRULY CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. Such life is never aimless; but how many people could give no rational answer to the question, What are you living for? 2. Its aim, however, does not lie within the circle of the seen and temporary. While not indifferent to the claims of the present world, its ambition pitches higher. 3. Its end and substance is Christ. 4. A life is possible which, while in a sense Christ, shall not be such in the full and proper sense of the term. St. Paul has just spoken of Christians who were insincere and contentious. So now there are men whose life is Christ, pre-eminently, it may be, but not wholly. II. WHAT CHRISTIAN DEATH IS, AND HOW IT OUGHT TO BE REGARDED. 1. It is Christian death of which he speaks, yet we cannot but be struck with an assumption he makes concerning death in general—living, only not in the flesh. "All live unto God." 2. The life out of the flesh which Christians live is a higher and more advanced life than that of the present.

Not that there is anything essentially evil or degrading in the flesh; but death will, to those who love Christ, obviously be so far gain that it will clear away a throng of hindrances to the free consecration of the soul to God. 3. The pre-eminence is defined as being with Christ. (1) Believers are already with Him, "joined to Him," &c., but in important respects we are at present not with Him. He is beyond the reach of our sense. (2) Death raises the saint to be with Him immediately, although we shall be nearer after the resurrection. 4. St. Paul does not measure this pre-eminence of Christian death over Christian life. He is content with a general statement of its exceeding superiority; it is "much more than much better." III. CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DEATH REGARDED AS AN ALTERNATIVE.

1. Ordinarily, even Christians recoil from death, partly for want of an adequate faith, partly from physical shrinking. 2. Within limits this desire for life is not blameworthy. Such a sense of future blessedness as should spoil earth for us is nowhere encouraged in Scripture; it would be incompatible with our duty to God and man, and in many cases it is desirable for others that we should stay. 3. But whether life be more or less desirable, it should be spent under the assurance that death is gain, i.e., if life be Christ, otherwise we have no reason to expect that death would bring any advantage. 4. Granting this, however, if the will of God ordains life, it is an unspeakable grace to live and not die. It is service for the blessed Master, the fruit of which is so ample that we can afford to wait for everlasting life. Be death ever so desirable, it is our own fault if the happiness of life does not more than counterbalance the trial of it. Other things being equal, the more life, the more heaven. Conclusion: 1. How startling a contrast the current life of man forms with this lofty ideal. 2. When this august profession is more than a profession, how rare is the type of character which answers to the apostolic model. 3. Yet this same life is the only secure, rational, and happy life to live. (*J. D. Geden, D.D.*) *The Christian's estimate of life and death* :—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE A DESCRIPTION OF IT. The Christian lives—1. From Christ. Christ is the source of his existence. 2. On Christ. Christ is the support of the life He has given, nourishing it with communications from Himself. 3. To Christ. Coming from Him, He is its aim and end. II. THE DESIRE HE HAS WHILE LIVING THIS LIFE (ver. 23). 1. "To set loose a second time," as vessels, not outward bound, but from a foreign port on a return voyage. He is not looking back on the country behind him, he is looking on the sea which he has to cross before he can get home. 2. Why? Because Christ is there. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" 3. This is the result of the new life which tends towards Christ, its source. 4. Thus to be with Christ is "beyond all comparison better." There is a fruition of Christ above, compared with which the highest enjoyment we can get out of Him here is as nothing. III. A FEELING IN THE CHRISTIAN'S MIND COUNTERACTING THIS DESIRE, viz., a desire to remain, springing from—1. Love to Christ. "To me to live is Christ"—it is for Christ's honour and glory to live a fruitful life. 2. Love for his fellow-men. Love for self would say "Go"; love for perishing sinners is stronger, and says "Stay." The hesitation only lasted as long as he was speaking of it. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *A comparative view of life and death* :—I. BY THOSE WHO LOOK AT LIFE ON ITS BRIGHT SIDE.

1. To me to live is gaiety, delightful society; and to die is the quenching of all joy, to plunge into I know not what, and to go where I do not wish to go. 2. To me to live is the indulgence of the luxury of my senses; to die is the destruction of all that gratifies them. 3. To me to live is affluence in what all are coveting; to die would be to have all this seized by others. 4. To me to live is successful enterprise, competition overcome, prosperity, power, fame; to die that would be to lose the field of my career. II. BY THOSE WHO LOOK ON THE DARK SIDE. To me to live is a hard thing; it is to endure privation, poverty, pain. Well then, would you die in preference? Oh, no, that would be worse. Why so? Sometimes the person can hardly tell—there is an undefined horror of death, but sometimes there is the power of conscience in the case. III. BY THOSE WHO LOOK ON LIFE IRRELIGIOUSLY. 1. To me to live is a course in which my pleasures are poisoned with vexation; but at any rate it is for so long an exemption from what I have to expect hereafter. Besides, while I live I may repent and reform; but to me to die is perdition. 2. To me to live, says the atheist, is to have the play of all my senses, to take all I dare or can of immediate good, to exult in defiance of what superstition has feigned an almighty power, perhaps to command great attention by my genius. On the contrary, to die is to have all this broken up, and to become a clod of earth. IV. BY THE CHRISTIAN. To live is Christ and to die

is to be with Him, therefore gain—far better. (*John Foster.*) *To live is Christ and to die is gain.*—That which a man loves supremely is that for which he lives—money, fame, pleasure, &c. The lofty altitude of moral nature to which we have to aspire is to find in Christ our only reason for living. Apart from this, the yearning aspirations and voids of humanity can never be satisfied. I. LIFE IN CHRIST COMPREHENDS ALL TRUE LIFE—science, art, beauty, music, all that adorns the saint, strengthens the worker, sustains the sufferer. All life rooted in Christ will bear all manner of fruits and be beautiful with all the hues of heaven. Into what base are our life-roots struck? II. LIFE IN CHRIST CAN SEE THE ULTERIOR PHASE OF WHAT MEN CALL DEATH. The eye of true life can see clear through the dispensation of dying, and behold the “gain;” can see straight through the troubled night of the final act of man upon earth, and gladden itself with the sight of the morning glory that falls for ever on the hills of heaven. To die is mystery; speculation; life’s most desperate venture; annihilation—this is the creed of those whose life is not centred in Christ. Compare this creed with the gain which Christianity discloses. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Christian life and death:*—There are only two questions that a truly wise man would think it of any essential consequence to ask in regard to himself, “What is the proper object of life?” “What is beyond life?” Here, then, only they are completely answered. Let us—

I. INQUIRE INTO THE MEANING OF THE WORDS, “TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST.” True experimental Christianity is—1. A life of dependence on Christ, as of children on the head of a family. This dependence is (1) constant; (2) humble; (3) trustful; (4) invisible, but real. 2. A life of communion with Christ; as between two dearest friends. This is (1) habitual; (2) cordial; (3) private and public. 3. A life of conformity and devotedness to Christ, as servants to an illustrious and beloved master. This is entire, and embraces (1) all the occupations of life whatever they may be, secular or sacred; (2) all the thoughts and affections. II. THE GROUND WE HAVE TO INFER THAT WHEN “TO LIVE IS CHRIST,” TO DIE WILL BE GAIN. Because—1. To whatever world death shall introduce us, Christ will be Lord of it. “I have the keys of Hades,” &c. “I go to prepare a place for you.” 2. The graces and tempers of such a life as the Christian’s must be the root and commencement of the happiness of that world, whatever it be as to particulars. “Whatsoever a man soweth.” “Blessed are the poor in Spirit,” &c. 3. We are assured that there will be an illustrious manifestation of Christ for the very purpose of making death gain. “Our conversation is in heaven,” &c. (1 Cor. xv. 42). Improvement: 1. What an unspeakable advantage has the Christian over every other character. 2. Let the Christian be satisfied that death is gain, without prying into particulars. 3. Learn the importance of keeping together what God has made inseparable. Life Christ, and death gain. (*T. N. Toller.*) *Christian life and death:*—I. CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. Separation for Christ, from the world, self, sin. 2. Dedication to Christ. All are dedicating their life to something—fashion, money, pleasure, science, fame. 3. Use by Christ. Religion is not a man’s transformation into something different, but his acceptance by Christ for the accomplishment of his purpose. 4. Likeness to Christ, in love and knowledge. 5. Concealment in Christ. II. CHRISTIAN DEATH. “Gain,” because heaven. 1. No more trial and sickness, but eternal health and peace. 2. No more bereavement, but eternal union. 3. No more superstition, but eternal light. 4. No more sorrow over the dissensions of Christ’s Church, but eternal harmony. 5. No more spiritual ignorance, but perfect knowledge. 6. No more temptation and sin, but perfect safety and holiness. 7. No more death, but the fadeless life. (*H. G. Guinness.*) *Christly life and gainful death:*—I. THE CHRISTIAN’S LIFE IS CHRIST. 1. Obedience to Christ’s precepts. These preferred (1) to the dictates of man, (2) and to personal inclinations. 2. Admiration of Christ’s character. Jesus is regarded as—(1) The ideal of perfection. (2) The model of imitation. 3. Devotion to Christ’s interests. True Christians seek—(1) The extension of Christ’s dominion. (2) The exaltation of Christ’s name. 4. Inspiration by Christ’s Spirit. (1) In us there is no inherent holiness. (2) Our good desires are derived from Christ. 5. Sustentation by Christ’s power. (1) We are naturally impotent. (2) Christ works in His people, and they can do all things through Him strengthening them. II. THE CHRISTIAN’S DEATH IS GAIN. 1. Physically. The resurrection body will be characterized by—(1) Perfect health. (2) Perfect beauty. (3) Capability of increased power and activity. 2. Mentally. (1) All hindrances to intellectual pursuits will be removed. (2) Mental facilities will be increased. 3. Socially. Death introduces the Christian to—(1) A more respectable circle of acquaintance. (2) The great and

good of all ages. (b) The holy angels. (c) Christ Himself. (2) A better place of residence. (3) Unprecedented possessions. 4. Spiritually. After his decease the Christian has—(1) A freedom from external temptations. (2) A deliverance from inherent depravity. (3) A constant manifestation of the glory of God. (*W. Sidebottom.*) *The good man's life and death*:—1. How ominously the words "live" and "die" follow each other. There is but a comma between them. Life is but death's vestibule. 2. If you would get a fair estimate of the happiness of a man, you must judge him in these two closely connected things, his life and his death. Solon said, "Call no man happy till he is dead; for you know not what changes may pass upon him in life." We add, "because if the life to come be miserable that shall far outweigh the highest happiness he has enjoyed in this." I. *The good man's life*. 1. It derives its parentage from Christ. The righteous man has two lives, that which he has inherited from his parents, and a spiritual life, which is as much above mental life as that is above the animal or the plant. 2. Christ is its sustenance. Without Christ the new-born spirit must become vague emptiness. 3. The fashion of his life is Christ. Every man has a model by which he endeavours to shape his life. Men do not always do a thing because it is right, but because some one does it whom we take as a standard of propriety. What an outcry there is against a man who dares to be singular, and says, "I will not follow your model, I will follow Christ." 4. The end of his life is Christ; not wealth, respectability. 5. Its happiness and glory is all in Christ. II. *The good man's death*. Why does not death spare the good and take the bad. Gain! is it not loss in every sense? No; in every sense in which it is loss it is immeasurable gain. 1. He loses friends, wife, children; but only for a time; he gains them for ever. 2. He loses his wealth; but he gains eternal riches, and those who have no money to lose are made rich for evermore. 3. He loses the means of grace, but gains heaven. 4. He loses his partial knowledge; but sees face to face. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Life and death in Christ*:—I. *LIFE IN CHRIST*. Life for this man is—1. Negatively. Not (1) the life of the beasts that perish. Meat, drink, clothing, are the means of preserving life; but not the objects for which we live. A disciple of Christ lives on them, but not for them. (2) To acquire a great property. Property is useful in fulfilling some of the ends of life, but when it comes to be an end in itself it is no longer a blessing. (3) Pleasure. He will not occupy the day in chasing thistle-down. (4) Honour. He has gotten the favour of God. (5) In refusing and avoiding these things. Strip them all off, and you are no nearer a true life in the Lord. Life consists neither in having them nor wanting them. 2. Positively. His life is not a life with Christ, nor even in Christ. His very life was Christ. His former self was lost. Henceforth he lives Christ. His common life, when he lies down and rises up, when he labours and rests, in private and public. II. *DEATH IN CHRIST*. The substance of the inheritance beyond we know from verse 23 is the same Christ. What are the gains? 1. Peace instead of war. Here Christ and conflict; there Christ and peace. 2. Here Christ and ignorance; seeing in part, through a glass darkly; there Christ and light. 3. Here Christ and sins; there Christ and purity. 4. Here Christ and pain; there Christ and perfect joy. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *The significance of the apostle's sentiment*:—When did he utter this? It was not as he rose from earth dazzled into blindness by the Redeemer's glory, and the words of the first commission were ringing in his ears. It was not in Damascus, while as the scales fell from his eyes he recognized the Lord's goodness and power. Nor was it in Arabia where supernatural wisdom so fully unfolded to him the facts and truths which he was so uniformly to proclaim. It sprang not from some momentary elation as at Cyprus where he confounded the sorcerer and converted the Roman pro-consul. No, it was written at Rome, in bonds, and after years of unparalleled toil and suffering. His past career had been signalized by stripes, imprisonment, shipwrecks, and unnumbered perils, but he did not regret them. He had been "in weariness and painfulness," &c., but his ardour was unchilled; and let him only be freed, and his life prolonged, and his motto would still be, "For me to live is Christ." It did not repent the venerable confessor now, when he was old, infirm, and a prisoner, with a terrible doom suspended over him, that he had done, travelled, spoken, and suffered so much for Christ. Nor was the statement like a suspicious vow in a scene of danger, which is too often wrung from cowardice, and held up as a bribe to the Great Preserver, but forgotten when the crisis passes, and he who made it laughs at his own timidity. No. It was no new course that the apostle proposed, it was only a continuation of those previous habits which his bondage had for a season interrupted. Could

there be increase to a zeal that had never flagged, or could those labours be multiplied which had filled every moment and called out every energy? In fine, the saying was no idle boast, like that of Peter at the last supper—the flash of a sudden enthusiasm so soon to be drowned in tears. For the apostle had the warrant of a long career to justify his assertion, and who can doubt that he would have verified it, and nobly shown, as hitherto, for him to live was Christ? He sighed not under the burden, as if age needed repose; or sank into self-complacency, as if he had done enough, for the Lord's commission was still upon him, and the wants of the world were as numerous and pressing as to claim his last word and urge his last step. (*Professor Eadie.*) *The reason why some men cling to life*:—I remember when I used to live in the south of England, there was a story abroad about some man that was thrown over the face of the Isle of Wight chalk cliffs. They found him in the morning lying down there among the white boulders and black sea-weed, and below the finger nails there was powdered chalk that he had scraped in his desperate clutch as he fell to save himself. My friends, there are some of you that grasp at life like that, and for something of the same reason, because you are afraid of the smash when you get down to the bottom. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *To me to live is Christ*.—1. The rendering is literally, “To me life is Christ,” life altogether, everywhere, always is neither more nor less than this. 2. The word has wide application. The blade of grass, the tree, the worm, bird, beast, man, God, live. But there is life proper to each. In the lower forms it is simple, but as we ascend life becomes more complex, difficult, and, therefore, more noble. That is the noblest thing which surmounts disaster or suffering which retrieves itself or is retrieved. The life of man has so suffered, and has been so retrieved. 3. The text expresses an infinite indebtedness. No man could confer a benefit on fellow-man so great as to put him under this law. Not to benefactor, defender, deliverer, could you say this. I. *THIS CANON RULES THE THOUGHT*. The intellectual life is Christ's. This is not, however, to impair mental freedom. Man may expatiate on any field, making fresh discoveries at every step. But from the vantage ground of the Christ life all acquired knowledge can be put in right relations and error detected. Christ does not reveal all truth, but places man on the mountain-top of truth, where he is never out of the view of some truths. II. *TAKE LIFE AS SENTIMENT*—thought with aroma in it, and beauty in it, without which no life is complete. How shall we keep the poetry in our life? Only by having the beauty of Christ's life. III. *TAKE LIFE AS FORCE*—active moral force. A life without much force may be pure and good, but it can never be beneficent. A life with force may be destructive. To constitute good human force we need more than energy and self-will. We need right motives and wise means. If you leave Jesus Christ out of your life you cannot have any of them perfectly, “Be strong in the Lord,” &c. IV. *TAKE LIFE AS HOPE, ASPIRATION, DESTINY*. What is life if it be not this much. Without an assured future, no present of any kind can be worth a hearty interest. Have we an assured future without Jesus Christ? “Because He lives we shall live also.” Conclusion: Is it Christ for you to live, or money, sentient pleasure, ambition, indifference, emptiness? (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *Christ our life*:—We can see what this did for Paul. 1. It gave steady perseverance to his endeavours. 2. It put a tone of charity on all his intercourse. 3. It gave him calmness under trial and persecution. I. *SO FAR AS OUR LIFE IS FEELING* we may say the text. Take—1. Our thinking. The unity, peace, freedom, safe guidance of our thoughts, follow and are assured if to us to think is Christ. 2. Our trusting. No fear comes to us out of the uncertainty and insecurity of our earthly trusts if our great trust rests on Christ. 3. Our loving. There will be an ever-enlarging love to men if our first love be set on Christ. 4. Our hoping—that hope is full of immortality which can build on this sure foundation, “Jesus is mine.” II. *SO FAR AS OUR LIFE IS ASSOCIATION*, we may say the text. 1. In friendship His presence can make our hearts burn within us. 2. In the family He can be the all-hallowing thought sanctifying the home life. 3. In society He can make by His unseen presence our social fellowships purer and more truly happy. If this is not so it is because we have permitted the un-Christly stamp to get printed on our associations. III. *SO FAR AS LIFE IS ACTIVITY* we may say the text. 1. In business, “Let every man wherein he is called,” &c. 2. In the Church. 3. In the world of morals, politics, science: all these are spheres of Christ's rule. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *Christ the saints' life*:—1. There is no other name but Christ's which has life in it. There is no life in the world's wealth, learning, honour, love.

If they do not destroy, they afford no protection or sustenance. To be Christless is to be lifeless. 2. Is it possible that St. Paul can be speaking of a mere *man*? This is not an accidental expression of temporary excitement. It is a sentiment that pervades his writings (chap. iii. 7-9; Gal. ii. 20, vi. 14). On the Socinian hypothesis all this is extravagant and idolatrous. Where do we find succeeding prophets speaking thus of Moses? 3. Paul means that Christ constituted his life. In what sense? I. CHRIST WAS THE BESTOWER AND SUSTAINER OF IT. He was this naturally (Heb. i. 2; John i. 3; Heb. i. 3). On this ground Adam in his state of innocence would have said that the Son of God was his life. But Paul was thinking of Christ as—1. The life of pardon. Distinguish the gaining of pardon and the persuasion that it has been gained. A rebel may be pardoned without knowing it, but before he can be happy he must know it. Paul knew fully that Christ had forgiven him. 2. The life of love. Pardon properly is only the capacity for living; but love is the soul's life. How this love burned in Paul towards God and towards man. 3. The life of hope. Hope is life; despair is death. The unbeliever is hopeless and therefore lifeless. II. CHRIST WAS THE OBJECT OR THE ENERGIES OF THAT LIFE HE HAD BESTOWED. Paul had three reasons for his engrossing consecration to Christ. 1. A reason of justice. Christ had surrendered His life for him, and equity demanded that he should consecrate his life to Christ (2 Cor. v. 14-15). Life for life: Christ gave all He could give: Paul returns all he can. Gratitude facilitates the justice, and makes the duty a delight. 2. A reason of self-interest. (1) Unless he rendered the service, he would renounce the discipleship and be a castaway (1 Cor. ix. 27). (2) He had respect unto the recompense of the reward of all duty well discharged (Luke xix. 17-19). 3. A reason of taste. He liked the work for its own sake. (*W. Anderson, LL.D.*) *To serve Christ must be our one aim*:—It is said of Thomas Pett, the miser, that his pulse rose and fell with the funds. He never lay down or rose that he did not bless the inventor of compound interest. His one gloomy apartment was never brightened with coal, candle, or the countenance of a visitor, and he never ate a morsel at his own expense. Of course he made money, for he gave himself wholly to it; and we ought not to forget that the same single-mindedness and self-denial would make Christians rich towards God. What is wanted in the service of Christ is the same unity of purpose which has ruled all men who have won the object for which they lived. He who makes God's glory the one only aim before which all other things bow themselves, is the man to bring honour to his Lord. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The ideal of Christian life*:—For me to live is—I. FAITH IN CHRIST. 1. Without faith life is dwarfed and desolate. 2. The grander faith's object, and the firmer faith's trust, the nobler life. 3. Christ is the grandest object, and faith in Him the strongest trust. II. MEDITATION ON CHRIST. 1. We can come very near Him. 2. This meditation is sweet. The thought of Christ the antidote to life's sorrows. III. ACTION FOR CHRIST. 1. Inspired by the loftiest motive: Christ. 2. Of the most diverse character. 3. With the best result. IV. HOPE IN CHRIST. 1. He is the hope of this life and consequently glorifies it. 2. He is our hope for eternity—"Because I live ye shall live also." (*Paxton Hood.*) *The great end and business of a Christian's life is to glorify Christ*:—I. I ARGUE IT THUS:—1. We have life from Him; life, therefore, should be to Him. A supernatural influence causeth a supernatural tendency. As rivers run into the sea from whence their channels are filled, so doth grace cause all the issues and outgoings of the spiritual life to return to Christ from whence they came. 2. The right Christ has to our service. We are His by every right and title (Rom. xiv. 7-9). II. TO MAKE THIS CLEAR LET US EXAMINE THE SEVERAL TITLES CHRIST HATH TO A BELIEVER. 1. By creation (Heb. i. 2). Note—(1) The absolute right that accrueeth to Him from hence. We were made out of nothing by Him; all we have, therefore, is His—mind, eyes, tongue, hands, &c. His is a right both of jurisdiction as a king, and of propriety as a creator. (2) The intention of the Creator (Prov. xvi. 4; Rom. xi. 36). All things were made for man, but man himself for God. Our end was not to eat, drink, sleep, &c., but to live and use all things for God. (3) The obligation left upon the creature to love and serve Him that created us. 2. Preservation, by which the title of creation is daily renewed and reinforced (Acts xvii. 28; Heb. i. 3). 3. Redemption (1 Cor. vi. 20). Consider—(1) The right. (2) The price (Pet. i. 18-19). 4. Conquest (Col. i. 13). 5. Actual possession (1 Cor. vi. 15). 6. Resignation and voluntary consent (S. Song. ii. 16; 2 Cor. viii. 5; 2 Chron. xxx. 8). III. THE

USE. To persuade us to make it our business to honour Christ and advance Him.

1. Directions. (1) You must close with Him by faith, and use Him to the end which God hath appointed Him (2 Thess. i. 11-12). (2) Consecrate and dedicate yourselves to Christ's use (Rom. xii. 1). (3) Use yourselves as those that are Christ's, improving your time, estates, strength, relations, talents, for His glory (Zech. xiv. 20). (4) Honour Him by the holiness of your conversation (1 Pet. ii. 12). (5) Let Christ be endeared to you by all your enjoyments. Temporal and spiritual (1 Cor. iii. 21). (6) Count it an honour to suffer for Christ's sake (Acts v. 41; Phil. i. 29).

2. Motives. (1) You are not your own, but are under another Lord. (2) We have owned Christ's right in baptism (1 Pet. iii. 21). (3) There will be a day of accounts when the great God of recompenses will reckon with you. (4) The utility and profit of it. (a) For the present an interest in Christ's intercession (John xvii. 9-10). (b) Heaven in the eternity to come. (*T. Manton, D.D.*)

Diverse views and aims of life:—To some men to live is a man, for a man; they are content to merge their individuality in his; they do not care to be known if he is known; they always wish to be regarded as his friends; they live on his words; they immortalize themselves by recording them; to please him is their highest honour and felicity, and they leave a beautiful biography behind them in which they entomb and lose themselves, and rear a monument to the memory of their idol. Such was Boswell's "Life of Johnson"—"To me to live is Johnson!" Such was Lockhart's "Life of Scott"—"To me to live is Scott!" Such is the elegant tribute of Tacitus to Julius Agricola—"To me to live is Agricola!" Such is the, to me, sad and shocking life of Cicero, by Dr. Middleton—"To me to live is Cicero!" But Paul said, "To me to live is Christ!" To some men to live is a science. They are absorbed by it; the pursuit of it is the unconscious charm of their existence. All things and all bodies are regarded as through the lens supplied by it. To Lyell and Murchison—"To me to live is Geology!" To Rosse or Nicholl—"To me to live is Astronomy!" To Liebig or Davy, to Faraday or Matueccei—"To me to live is Chemistry or Electricity?" To Owen or Cuvier—"To me to live is Comparative Anatomy!" To Young—"To me to live is a Rosetta-stone!" But Paul said, "To me to live is Christ!" And some men live for an idea. They live for it; in it; become martyrs to it. Bravely, but sometimes very foolishly, they identify the whole world with their one idea. If it expires all perishes. Hence Vane and Sidney would say, "To me to live is a Republic!" Hence Leibnitz and Kant and Descartes concentrated their life on an idea. But Paul said, "To me to live is Christ!" And to some men to live is self. "What shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" (*Paxton Hood.*)

Life in Christ:—Behold yonder flower; it lives by means of the plant on which it grows; does it not? Did not the plant give it birth? and does not the plant supply it nourishment? and if you separate it from the plant will it not die? Now, consider it once more—it lives for the plant on which it grows; does it not? Does it not blossom into beauty that it may adorn it as a lovely ornament, and ripen into maturity that it may serve it by forming precious seed? Just so Paul grew as a flower upon Christ. He felt that he lived by Christ; and so he determined to live for Christ; and the sweet meaning contained in this fragrant saying that he breathes out an offering to Jesus in the thought of life for Christ. (*H. G. Guinness.*)

Christ the grandest life:—If life is to be measured by the dignity of its affections, by their purity and power, then what affection is so lofty, so inspiring, so ennobling, as the love of Christ? If life is to be estimated by its raptures of exalted hope, its frequent glimpses of unfathomed being, its cadencies of harmony borne upon the ear from distant spheres of praise, then what raptures are so glowing as those kindled by the life of Christ? If life is to be estimated by what it performs, and by its motives to performance, then what life can hold so lengthened a series of unselfish exploits, as his who lives for Christ? What motive can occupy so high a ground or purpose, so glorious an aim? "For me to live is Christ." (*Paxton Hood.*)

Love the true life:—Our love is our life. What is your life? It is even that which is your strongest love. We do not live indeed until we love in real earnest; and the greater, the nobler our love, the greater and the nobler will be the life born from it. And hence there are many persons who have lived long in the world, but they have never begun to live indeed. No one has begun to live whose whole existence has been consumed upon the life of self. We do not know what we are capable of till something crosses our path, and says, "Live for me." Look at that gay girl, merry and thoughtless, careless and quite unprophetic of the future,

simply living on from day to day, from wave to wave of laughter and pleasure—the privileged and licensed plague of the family. Let a year or two roll round, and look at her again. She is not less interesting—nay, but how much more interesting? Young as she is—almost venerable—the merry gaiety is gone, and in its place the sweet seriousness of widowhood; and all the powers of her being have been aroused, for a little helpless being has fallen at her feet, and said to her, through its blue eyes, “Take care of me.” If she could put her thoughts into speech she would say, “For me to live is my darling.” It has revolutionized her—it has robbed her of her selfish coquetry, and given to her a selfishness almost divine. It is so with the husband and the father. He is most capable of noble exertions as the love of his life takes noble shapes to him, and rouses to noble energies. Nor can I conceive how the heavy and monotonous wheels of business could roll on at all, if God had not made our nature so, that the social love becomes a sacred incentive to action, and in spite of himself man is made to live for beings outside of himself—to find his happiness in their happiness—and thus to find that “Life is indeed more than meat, and the body than raiment.” But this principle of our existence is intensified when we become the subjects of a holy, divine affection—when we become so related to divine persons and realities as to say, “To me to live is Christ.” Then a great affection enthrones itself, so that it takes possession of all our powers, “body, soul, and spirit;” it sways a sceptre over all, and unites all to itself; it commands the resources of the mind and the heart, and makes them all its own. (*Ibid.*) *Christ the end of life*:—As the river’s flowing, even away amid inland hills, is all advance towards the distant sea: as the blossom’s beauty, even in early April days, is all progress towards the autumn fruit; so all St. Paul’s life, even those acts and thoughts that seemed remotest, was a means to an end—Christ. (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*) *Various degrees in living Christ*:—Suppose you have three students sitting with their canvases on easels before the work of some great painter. They have looked on that work until all have caught inspiration from it, and, with painstaking earnestness, they all try to reproduce what they see in the picture before them. Each will do his very best; each will have some palpable resemblance to the work, but each will differ from the others according to his ability. And with ourselves there is not the slightest reason for discouragement, though we are not able to reach the same degree of excellence that is obtained by some fellow-disciple. Let every one try, as near as possible, to reproduce the original. (*W. G. Pascoe.*) *The means of living Christ*:—A vine is growing; it grows in good ground; it grows strong. It draws the sap of the ground, and bears much fruit; but the fruit is bad. It is bitter to the taste, and poisonous. Another vine grows near it—a good vine—all good. They take a branch of the good vine, and bend it gently towards the wild vine, and they lay a strong hand on the wild vine, and bend it towards the good vine. They touch. They are fastened—the branch of the good vine to the stem of the evil. As yet this produces no change on the wild vine; but it is some needful preparatory work. They now make an opening in the stem of the wild vine, and another in the branch of the good vine. They place them into each other at the wound, and bind them up. The wounds heal, and the two have grown into each other. The next step in the process is to cut off the head of the wild vine, and leave instead the now engrafted branch of the good. Then the branch of the good is severed from its parent stem. The root of the evil tree remains; but its head now is the new and the good tree. “I live,” murmurs the root and stem of the old evil tree far below.” I live—you live; you have no leaf, no flower, no fruit: all the life is in the new tree. “I live,” still humbly murmurs the old root out of the ground; “nevertheless not I, but the new good tree liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the ground, I live through the new and good tree, which loved me, and gave itself for me.” This cutting, and bleeding, and binding, and grafting process took place while the patient was prostrate and blind outside the gate of Damascus. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *The constancy of Paul’s purpose to live Christ*:—Changed and varied the scenes around might be, but the heart was always the same: true to its one grand object far more steadily than the magnetic needle which does not always point to the north. The pinched miser might for a minute forget his wealth: a spring of something better might gush unawares in the ambitious man’s heart, and make him forget the aim of his ambition: the watching mother might for a brief instant be startled into a forgetfulness that would take away the heavy burden of the seldom-ceasing remembrance of her little dying babe: but the moment never came and the place never was, in which

the great Apostle of the Gentiles forgot his Saviour. Was it too much, then, when looking over a life thus leavened and pervaded, he said, with a truthfulness of which words were but poor expression, "To me to live is Christ!" (A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.) *Why Christianity does not prevail*:—The chief reason why Christianity does not yet pervade the world, is that Christ does not pervade the life of Christians. (W. Arnot, D.D.) To die is gain.—I. WHAT KIND OF AN EVENT DEATH IS. 1. It is the most dreadful of events. (1) Its personifications show this: "Tyrant," "monster," "usurper," "king of terrors," "last enemy." (2) Every circumstance connected with it is appalling. (a) Its cause and sin. (b) Its forerunners—spiritual and bodily. (c) Its accompaniments, forced separation, burial. (d) "After death the judgment." 2. It is the most decisive event. It places the righteous beyond the possibility of fear, and the ungodly beyond the possibility of hope. 3. It is that event in which the excellency of religion pre-eminently appears. Religion does not prevent the hissing of the serpent, but it extracts his sting; it does not show another entrance into Canaan than through the Jordan, but it divides the flood. II. IN WHAT SENSE DYING IS A GAIN. It exchanges earth for heaven. Think of—1. Its beauty. 2. Its purity. 3. Its pleasures. 4. Its friendship. (A. Pope.) *Death a gain*:—I. PHYSICALLY: freedom from bodily restrictions, pain, and temptation. II. MENTALLY. The liberation of the mind; multiplication of subject of thought; heavenly inspiration. III. SOCIALLY. Re-union of friends; indefinite enlargement of the circle of acquaintance; society under the happiest, healthiest, and permanent conditions. IV. SPIRITUALLY. "For ever with the Lord." (W. H. H. Murray.) *The gain of dying*:—I. IN REGARD TO DEATH ITSELF IT IS NOT A GAIN. It is part of the curse, the effect of sin. We may look further and consider these things as they bear upon eternity. The irrevocable step is taken. Every other step may be recovered, but not this. If death be not gain, what is it? Infinite, eternal loss. It is no small thing—(1) To lose one's lamp of profession; it has cost years of hypocrisy to keep it; (2) to lose one's hope; (3) to lose one's body; (4) but to lose one's soul, what is there not in that loss. He that hath not death for his gain, what has he for his gain? (1) Is his money his gain? he had better not have acquired it. (2) His talent? he had better not have used it? (3) His soul? he had better not have had it. (4) The gospel? he had better never have heard it. II. IN WHAT SENSE CAN THE CHILD OF GOD SAY THAT DEATH IS GAIN. 1. Negatively. (1) Not because he has more pardon. He is as much forgiven on earth as in heaven. (2) Not because he is more a child of God. (3) Not because he is more the object of God's sovereign love. 2. Positively. Because—(1) He enjoys perfect freedom from sin and temptation. (2) He enters the land of perfect rest, full enjoyment, and unbroken peace. (3) He mingles with the society of perfected beings. (4) He is for ever with Christ. (J. H. Evans, M.A.) *The saints' death gain*:—I. THE CONVICTION OF THE APOSTLE. 1. It did not rest on observation or speculation. These would lead a man to regard death as the very reverse. We naturally shrink from death, and that because death is unnatural, yet we know it to be the destiny of every one of us. An element of uncertainty mingles with every other expectation, but with this none. Think, too, of its irrevocableness. Many of our efforts may be repeated, but there is no repetition of death. Mere human speculation, even in the wisest, never approached a conviction that death could bring gain. Strong desire and sublime guessing, this is all we find in Socrates or Cicero. 2. Paul's conviction rested on faith in Christ as the conqueror of death. The causes of aversion to death include the "dread of something after death." The only adequate explanation of death is that it is the wages of sin. The glorious tidings of the gospel are that Christ hath borne the curse and overthrown the power of death. Death is abolished, only the form remains. The saint shrinks from dying but has no fear of death. 3. The conviction stood in the very closest relation with the clause, "To live is Christ." Only those who are alive unto God will find death to be gain. II. THE FACT THAT TO THE CHRISTIAN DEATH IS GAIN. 1. It is wider, deeper, clearer, more accurate knowledge of God and truth. 2. It is perfect holiness. "We shall be like Him." 3. We shall enter a glorious society. 4. We shall engage in joyful tireless work. (R. Johnstone, LL.B.) *The benefit of death*:—I. IMMEDIATELY ON DEATH MAN IS CAPABLE OF GAIN. The text is altogether against the notion of the soul's sleep between death and the resurrection. 1. The soul is distinct from the body and is not merely the vigour of the blood (Gen. ii. 7; Eccles. xi. 7). It is distinct (1) in its supports; (2) in its operations; (3) as to weakness and perfection; (4) as to pleasure and pain; (5) in

the commands God hath given about it (Matt. vi. 25; *cf.*, Deut. iv. 9). 2. The soul can exercise its operations apart from the body (2 Cor. xii. 2). 3. That the souls of the saints do exist apart from the body appeareth from Scriptura (Phil. i. 3; 2 Cor. v. 1-2; Luke xxiii. 43). II. WHAT THIS GAIN IS. 1. Its nature. (1) Privatively. (a) A freedom from all misery (Rev. xiv. 13, xxi. 21; Matt. xxv. 21). There is to be no serpent in the upper Paradise. (b) Freedom from sin (1 Cor. xv. 26; Eph. v. 27; Jude 24). (2) Positively. (a) The vision of God (1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 John iii. 2). (b) The full fruition of God (2 Cor. iii. 18; 1 John iii. 2) in holiness and happiness. 2. Its comfortable adjuncts. (1) The place which is very glorious. (2) The company (Heb. xii. 22-23; Matt. viii. 11). As the loops of the tabernacle did couple the curtains, so dear love unites the glorified saints. III. WE SHALL LOSE NOTHING THAT SHALL NOT BE MADE UP. 1. Do we lose friends? They are better in heaven, and we shall rejoice them. 2. Is it ordinances that we lose? There the Lamb shall be the light of the New Temple. We shall study Divinity in the light of Christ's face; and drink of the fruit of the vine new with Christ (Matt. xxvi. 29). 3. Communion with God (1 Thess. iv. 17). There will be no cloud on that day. 4. Service and opportunities for glorifying God. We shall be more active in his praise. The instrument will be perfectly in tune. Here we often jar. There will be no spot or blemish (Eph. v. 27). 5. Comforts of this world. They are of use in our passage, and we must possess as if we possessed not (1 Cor. vii. 31); but there we are free from all needs. No man complains when he is recovered out of a disease, that he needs no more physic. IV. USE. 1. To commend Christ's service to you. If you have dedicated your life to Him, then death will be better (Gal. vi. 8). 2. A meditation for the dying. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The benefits which believers receive at death:*—In what respect death is gain to believers. I. IN RESPECT OF THEIR SOULS. It separates souls from bodies, not to their loss but to their gain. It is with the souls of believers as with Paul and his company in Acts xxvii. The ship broke in pieces, but the passengers came all safe to land. The benefit is twofold. 1. Perfection in holiness (Heb. xii. 23), which up to this consisted only in gradual advances. This perfection consists in—(1) Complete freedom from sin (Eph. v. 27); from its commission (Rev. xxi. 27); its very inbeing, the possibility of sinning (Rev. iii. 12). (2) The arrival of their holiness at the highest pitch they are capable of (Eph. iv. 13). (a) Their understandings shall be perfectly illuminated (1 Cor. xiii. 12). (b) Their wills shall be perfectly upright, so that they shall will nothing but good, without the least bias to the other side (Rev. xxi. 27). A perfect conformity betwixt God's will and theirs, without the least possible jarring (1 John iii. 2). (c) The executive faculty shall then perfectly answer the will with ease and delight (Matt. vi. 10). 2. Immediate entering into glory (Luke xxiii. 43). Here consider—(1) The glory they enter into. (a) A glorious place (2 Cor. v. 1; John xiv. 2; Rev. xxi. 23). (b) A glorious society (Heb. xii. 23-4; John xvii. 24). (c) A glorious state. What eye hath not seen. Rest and perfect blessedness. II. IN RESPECT OF THEIR BODIES. Death cannot harm them. 1. It cannot separate them from Christ (1 Thess. iv. 14). 2. It is a stage in their progress towards the resurrection. The saint's dust is precious, locked up in the grave as in a cabinet, till the Lord have further use for it. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *The antidote of death:*—I. TO WHOM THE STARTLING EXPRESSION APPLIES. To Christians and no others. The text is limited in its application by the previous clause. Character and privilege are unseparably connected. To all but Christians death is everlasting ruin. II. THE MEANING OF THE EXPRESSION. 1. There are few words that have a more powerful influence over human affairs than gain. It is the folly and the sin of men that they do not extend the application of it to moral subjects. Blessed the man who in reckoning up his gains can enter death as one of the items. 2. How wonderful does this appear when we consider what death is—the most fearful thing in the universe next to hell and sin. Yet it is gain to the believer. True, he loses all that is most precious to him in life upon earth; but all that he loses here compared with what he gains in heaven is as the surrender of a little homestead and a contracted farm to gain a kingdom and a crown, or parting with a single farthing for the acquisition of a princely revenue. Death is gain. (1) By delivering the Christian from all evils; labour and weariness, pain and weakness, care and fear, danger and disappointment. There will be no mortification of sin, for there will be no sin to mortify. No ignorance will becloud the judgment; no rebellion enslave the will, no depravity taint the heart, no disorder misguide the passions. And as there will be no evil in ourselves so there will be none in our companions. Hence there will be no

envies nor strifes. (2) Because it brings us to the possession and enjoyment of all desirable, great, and glorious things. (a) In heaven there will be all things really desirable. Here many of our desires are unreasonable and their objects unattainable, or if attained injurious, but in heaven there is no improper desire. We shall wish only for what is right and shall never be disappointed. (b) All things great and glorious. Here the things we desire are not great, and there is a disproportion between the object we covet and the intensity of our longings. There we shall have put away childish things. Two words are descriptive of the heavenly state. (a) Life—Eternal life. We know now only imperfectly what it is to live. There our intellectual, spiritual, and social being will be in full and everlasting development. (b) Glory. We shall not merely behold its infinite glories, but shall say, "All these are mine." Here possession and enjoyment are often separated; but in heaven the objective source of happiness and the subjective condition of the soul will be in harmony. III. Leaving these general remarks we may notice **THE RESIDENCE OF THE RIGHTEOUS**. Consider—1. The agreeable and happy associates of all who reach that blessed world. 2. Their employments. True, we shall rest from our labours, but activity and glory will not be labour. 3. Their condition. They have the light of perfect knowledge irradiating their understanding, the glow of perfect love warming their hearts, the purity of perfect holiness diffused through their character for ever. This gain accrues to all who live to Christ. We may advance a step further, and say that the death of a believer is, in a sense, gain to Christ. He is magnified by the death of His saints, in the support He administers, the consolation He imparts, the triumphant joys He inspires. Conclusion: 1. What a proof we have in this subject of the truth, excellence, and sustaining power of Christianity. 2. What a powerful means to overcome the undue love of life and fear of death. 3. How this subject should reconcile us to the death of our pious friends. (*J. A. James*). *Socrates and Paul on death*:—Socrates in prison in Athens, as Paul was in Rome, unjustly accused, too, as he was, a good teacher further, according to his light, though a despised and rejected one, was sustained by the consciousness that no crime had been his, by the thought, also, that his suffering and death were of God's will. But among his last words, before the hemlock bowl had done its work, was this saddest saying to his friends: "It is now time to depart:—for me to die—for you to live—but which of us is going to a better thing, is uncertain to every one except only to the Deity." These words are not unlike those of Paul, but nothing of Paul's hope and assurance glows within them. All is gloomy uncertainty, if not even despair. There is nothing said of gain, and where it is to be found. (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*) *The testimony of nature and of Christ concerning death*:—This is indeed a strange sound in the ears of nature, a sound of which nature knows nothing, and which sorely puzzles her. Death gain! Why, in nature's account-book death is sheer loss, the loss of everything, the loss of life, and of all that makes life pleasant and happy, the loss of the green fields and of the blue sky, of the sun and the moon and the stars, of the fresh air, of our homes and our gardens, of health, and strength, and mirth, and thought, and friendship, and love. It is the loss of all these bright and precious joys: and what does it give us in exchange? Darkness, and coldness, and numbness—a house of clay, with worms for our bedfellows—rotteness and nothingness. And can this be gain? Yes, brethren, if you are in Christ, as sure as Christ liveth, as sure as God liveth, it is gain. It is the passing from impurity to purity, from imperfection to perfection, from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality, from broken glimpses of joy glancing through clouds of sorrow, to the full ever-beaming sunshine of the presence of God. (*Archdeacon Hare*.) *Christ and death*:—As a father wades out into a stream to encourage his timid child to cross, so Christ went down into the river men had dreaded, but whose waters are full of cleansing, and whose farther waves beat on a golden shore. I regret to say that Christians are slow to improve the privilege of knowledge and faith. (*W. H. H. Murray*.) *What makes death gain*:—A leafless wood may preach you an awful sermon. Not only may you look upon it as a host of skeletons; it may also cry to you to be-think yourselves that even as these trees stand naked from head to foot before the eye of heaven, so will your souls ere long stand utterly bare and naked before the eye of God. Every cloak and mask you may have clad them in will be torn off. Every fading leaf and perishing flower—whatever is bred by the sun of this world, or put forth to win the eyes of this world—all the dress and drapery of our minds and hearts—our cleverness, our skill, our learning, our knowledge, our prudence, our industry, our gaiety, our good-fellowship—all those qualities of fair seeming

which have no higher aim than to look well in the sight of our neighbours—will be swept away; and nothing will remain but the skeletons of our souls, shivering in the sight of men and of angels, in the day of that last and terrible winter, when the glory of this world will have waned, and death will have spread out his hand over all the generations of mankind. Nothing will remain but the naked trunk and leafless branches of our souls, except those seeds of Christian faith and love, which may have remained secretly wrapt up in the bosom of the flowers. The leaf dies; for the leaf has no life in it. The flower dies; for the flower has no life in it. But the seed, if it be the seed of Christian faith and love, has life in it, and cannot die. When it falls to the ground, Christ sends His angels to gather it up, and bids them lay it by in the storehouses of heaven. By the world, indeed, it is unseen. The world perceives no difference between the flower that has seed in it, and the flower that has no seed. To the outward eye they look the same; for the outward eye sees only what is outward. But Christ knows His own: He beholds the seed within the heart of the flower: and He will not suffer it to die or to be lost. In the last day He will bring it forth, and will crown the branches again with the undying flowers of heaven. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) *The death of saints magnifies Christ*:—Rev. J. Hervey: Oh, welcome death! thou mayst well be reckoned among the treasures of the Christian. The great conflict is over; all is done. To live is Christ, but to die is gain.—Dr. Payson: The battle's fought—the battle's fought; and the victory is won; the victory is won for ever! I am going to bathe in an ocean of purity, and benevolence, and happiness to all eternity. Faith and patience, hold out.—Rev. G. Roberts: Be quiet, my son? Be quiet, my son? No, no! If I had the voice of an angel I would rouse the inhabitants of Baltimore, for the purpose of telling them of the joys of redeeming love. Victory! Victory! Victory through the blood of the Lamb!—Rev. P. Hardcastle: On the second day before his death his pulse was feeble, and he was evidently sinking. When asked, "Can you say that the precious Word which you have been preaching is now your individual salvation?" "Yes," said he, "and my strength." "And your comfort?" "Yes, and my peace." "And your refuge?" "Yes," said the dying man, "and my life, my life, my life!" He passed away in the sixtieth year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his ministry.—Rev. J. Dickens: "My dear brother, do you not already see the towers of the New Jerusalem?" said a Christian brother. "I do," was his reply. When asked by the same person if they should engage in prayer, he said—"I would rather engage in praise." In that exercise he spent his last breath. The last words uttered were—"Glory! Glory! Come, Lord Jesus!" (*J. Bate.*) *Two prospects in death*:—Before some of us there rise the high, cold, great snow mountains, on the summits of which nothing can live, and when we come to the base of them we look up and feel the trackless impassable wastes, and know not what lies beyond; but before others of us this man and those who hold with him, there has been a tunnel cut through the Alps, and it goes straight on, and comes out, keeping on in the same direction, beneath a bluer sky, and with a brighter land, with summer plains and a happier life spread before us in the warm south. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Contrasted views of death*:—"To die is gain," said Paul. "Out upon thee, thou ugly, foul phantom," said Charles Lamb, the mere man of letters, "I detest, abhor, and execrate thee, to be shunned as a universal viper, to be branded, proscribed, and evil spoken of. I care not to be carried with the tide that smoothly bears human life to eternity. I am in love with this green earth, the face of town and country, the unspeakable rural solitudes and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here—a new state of being staggers me." (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *Death differently viewed by different characters*:—You have been in a ship when it entered the harbour, and you have noticed the different looks of the passengers as they turned their eyes ashore. There was one who, that he might not lose a moment's time, had got everything ready for landing long ago; and now he smiles and beckons to yonder party on the pier, who in their turn, are so eager to meet him, that they almost press over the margin of the quay; and no sooner is the gangway thrown across, than he has hold of the arm of one, and another is triumphant on his shoulder, and all the rest are leaping before and after him on their homeward way. But there is another, who showed no alacrity. He gazed with pensive eye on the nearer coast and seemed to grudge that the trip was over. He was a stranger going amongst strangers, and though sometimes during the voyage he had a momentary hope that something unexpected might occur, and that some friendly face might recognize him in regions where he was going an alien and an adventurer.

—no such welcoming face is there, and with reluctant steps he quits the vessel, and commits himself to the unknown country. And now that every one else has disembarked, who is this unhappy man whom they have brought on deck, and whom, groaning in his heavy chains, they are conducting to the dreaded shore? Alas! he is a felon and a runaway, whom they are bringing back to take his trial there; and no wonder he is loath to land. Now, dear brethren, our ship is sailing fast. We shall soon hear the rasping of the shallows, and the commotion overhead, which bespeak the port in view. When it comes to that, how shall you feel? Are you a stranger, or a convict, or are you going home? Can you say, "I know whom I have believed"? Have you a Friend within the veil? And however much you may enjoy the voyage, and however much you may like your fellow passengers, does your heart sometimes leap up at the prospect of seeing Jesus as he is, and so being ever with the Lord? (*James Hamilton, D.D.*) *Happy to live or die in Christ* :—Just before Calvin died he wrote to a friend these words: "My respiration is difficult, and I am about to breathe the last gasp, happy to live and die in Jesus Christ, who is gain to all His children in life and death." He felt what Paul felt.

Ready for life or death :—A lady once said to John Wesley, "Suppose you knew you were to die at 12 o'clock to-morrow night, how would you employ the intervening time?" "Why, just as I intend to spend it now. I would preach this evening at Gloucester, and again at 5 o'clock to-morrow morning. After that I should ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, meet the Societies in the evening. Then repair to friend Martin's, who expects to entertain me, converse and pray with the family as usual, retire to my room at 10 o'clock, commend myself to my heavenly Father, lie down to rest, and wake up in glory!" *A believer's privilege at death* :—1. Believers at death shall gain the glorious sight of God. They shall see Him intellectually with the eyes of their mind, which divines call the beatifical vision; if there were not such an intellectual sight of God, how do the spirits of just men, made perfect, see Him? They shall behold the glorified body of Jesus Christ; and if it be pleasant to behold the sun, then how blessed a sight will it be to see Christ the Sun of Righteousness clothed with our human nature, shining in glory above the angels? Through Christ's flesh, as through a transparent glass, some bright rays and beams of the Godhead shall display themselves to glorified eyes; the sight of God through Christ will be very complacental and delightful; the terror of God's essence will be taken away; God's majesty will be mixed with beauty, and sweetened with clemency; it will be infinitely delightful to the saints to see the amiable aspects and smiles of God's face. 2. The saints at death shall not only have a sight of God, but shall enjoy the love of God; there shall be no more a veil on God's face, nor His smiles chequered with frowns, but His love shall discover itself in all its orient beauty and fragrant sweetness. Here the saints pray for God's love, and they have a few drops, but there they shall have as much as their vessel can receive. To know this love that passeth knowledge, this will cause jubilation of spirit, and create such holy raptures of joy in the saints as are superlative, and would soon overwhelm them if God did not make them able to bear it. 3. Believers at death shall gain a celestial palace, an house not made with hands. Here the saints are straitened for room, they have but mean cottages to live in, but they shall have a royal palace to live in; here is but their sojourning-house, there in heaven is their mansion-house, an house built high above all the visible orbs, an house bespangled with light, enriched with pearls and precious stones. And this is not their landlord's house, but their Father's house; and this house stands all upon consecrated ground; it is set out by transparent glass to show the holiness of it. 4. Believers at death shall gain perfection of holiness. Here grace was but in its cradle, very imperfect; we cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting; believers are said to receive but "the first-fruits of the Spirit." But at death the saints shall arrive at perfection, their knowledge clear, their sanctity perfect, their sun shall be in its full meridian splendour. How come the saints to have all this gain? Believers have a right to all this gain at death upon divers accounts: by virtue of the Father's donation, the Son's purchase, the Holy Ghost's earnest—and faith's acceptance. Therefore the state of future glory is called the saints' proper inheritance. They are heirs of God, and have a right to inherit. See the great difference between the death of the godly and the wicked; the godly are gainers at death, the wicked are great losers at death. They lose four things: 1. They lose the world. 2. They lose their souls. 3. They lose heaven. 4. They lose their hopes; for though they lived wickedly, yet they hoped God was merciful,

and they hoped that they should go to heaven. Some plants thrive best when they are transplanted: believers, when they are by death transplanted, cannot choose but thrive, because they have Christ's sweet sunbeams shining upon them. And what though the passage through the valley of the shadow of death be troublesome? who would not be willing to pass a tempestuous sea if he were sure to be crowned so soon as he came to shore? What benefits do believers receive at death? I. The saints at death have great immunities and freedoms. An apprentice when out of his time is made free: when the saints are out of their time of living, then they are made free, not made free till death. 1. At death they are freed from a body of sin. (1) It weighs us down; sin hinders us from doing good. A Christian is like a bird that would be flying up, but hath a string tied to its legs to hinder it; so he would be flying up to heaven with the wings of desire, but sin hinders him: "for what I would, that I do not." A Christian is like a ship that is under sail, and at anchor; grace would sail forward, but sin is the anchor that holds it back. (2) Sin is more active in its sphere than grace. How stirring was lust in David when his grace lay dormant! (3) Sin defiles the soul, it is like a stain to beauty, it turns the soul's azure brightness into sable. (4) Sin debilitates us, it disarms us of our strength: "I am this day weak, though anointed king:" so, though a saint be crowned with grace, yet he is weak, though anointed a spiritual king. (5) Sin is ever restless; "the flesh lusts against the Spirit." (6) Sin adheres to us, we cannot get rid of it. (7) Sin mingles with our duties and graces; we cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting. Death smites a believer as the angel did Peter, he made his chains fall off, so death makes all the chains of sin fall off. This makes a believer so desirous to have his pass to be gone; he would fain live in that pure air where no black vapours of sin arise. II. At death the saints shall be freed from all the troubles and incumbrances to which this life is subject. There are many things to embitter life and cause trouble, and death frees us from all. 1. Care. Care is a spiritual canker which eats out the comfort of life; death is the cure of care. 2. Fear. Fear is the ague of the soul which sets it a shaking; "there is torment in fear." Fear is like Prometheus's vulture, it gnaws upon the heart. 3. Labour. "All things are full of labour." They rest from their labours. 4. Suffering. Believers are as a lily among thorns; as the dove among the birds of prey. 5. Temptation. Though Satan be a conquered enemy, yet he is a restless enemy. After death hath shot its darts at us, the devil shall have done shooting his; though grace puts a believer out of the devil's possession, only death frees him from the devil's temptation. 6. Sorrow. Believers are here in a strange country, why then should they not be willing to go out of it? Death beats off their fetters of sin, and sets them free. Who goes weeping from a jail? Besides our own sins, the sins of others. O then be willing to depart out of the tents of Kedar! (*T. Watson.*) *Victory after death*:—Cæsar, after his victories, in token of honour, had a chair of ivory set for him in the senate, and a throne in the theatre; the saints, having obtained their victories over sin and Satan, shall be enthroned with Christ in the empyrean heaven. To sit with Christ denotes safety; to sit on the throne, dignity: "this honour have all the saints." In glory is a blessed rest—"there remaineth therefore a rest." A happy transit from labour to rest. Here we can have no rest, tossed and turned as a ball on a racket, "we are troubled on every side." How can a ship rest in a storm? But after death the saints get into their haven. Everything is quiet in the centre; God is "the centre where the soul doth sweetly acquiesce." A Christian, after his weary marches and battles, shall put off his bloody armour, and rest himself upon the bosom of Jesus, that bed of perfume; when death hath given the saints the wings of a dove, then they shall fly away to paradise and be at rest. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 22-26. But if I live in the flesh this is the fruit of my labour.—I. THE PERSONAL WEIGHED WITH THE PUBLIC, or the difficulties of the veteran philanthropist. II. MAN'S SUBLIMEST REASON FOR NOT WISHING IMMEDIATE TRANSLATION IS THAT HE MAY BE OF SPIRITUAL SERVICE TO THE WORLD. III. THE NEXT BEST CONDITION TO THAT OF BEING WITH CHRIST IS TO BE WORKING FOR HIS PEOPLE. "To be with Christ . . . to abide with you." How could there be hesitation in deciding the choice? Selfishness could not have hesitated. True, but selfishness would never have been called upon to make the election. Benevolence has its difficulties as well as selfishness. Love lifts a finger to the heavens and points another to the earth. The choice is between gain and service, and rightly estimated service is gain. It is worth all pain

and inconvenience to remain out of heaven so long as you can prepare your contemporaries for it. You are with Christ as long as you are with His work. The apostle is not a dreamy contemplatist always wishing for some more pleasant conditions of existence. He is a worker who finds satisfaction in labour. There is a disease in the Church which confounds religion with wishing for heaven. Persons afflicted with it hold their heads so erectly as not to see the spiritual darkness around them. They are dreamers, transcendentalists, but are they Christians? They are fond of hymns that warble the blessedness of heaven; they revel in texts that describe the rest, the power, the fascinations of the heavenly state. Let such diseased ones mark how the apostle conjoins "labour" and "gain," and how he balances what is "needful" for man with what would be pleasant to himself; and let them be rebuked and stimulated by the joy with which he anticipated restoration to his laborious life.

IV. THERE IS ONLY ONE WORLD IN WHICH YOU CAN SERVE MEN EVANGELICALLY; do not be in indecent haste to escape the opportunity. When you wish to enter heaven may you have a strong drawing to the service still to be done on earth.

V. GOD NEVER LEAVES THE EARTH ENTIRELY DESITUTE OF GREAT MEN. Elijah may deem himself alone, but God knows that there are seven thousand who have never kissed the world's dumb god. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

St. Paul's choice:—As an overfondness for life is a mean, effeminate passion that exposes us to the basest impressions, and renders us insensible to every honourable purpose, so a contempt of death has been esteemed one of the principal ingredients in a great character. From the views of heathen morality it is difficult to understand why he who had no sure prospect of another life should be over prodigal of this; but when we behold a man raised above the world by a just sense of immortality we cannot but applaud the example as an honour to human nature, and a glorious instance of the power of the gospel.

Notice—I. THE REASONS THAT INCLINED PAUL TO DESIRE TO DEPART—"To be with Christ." 1. This signifies that state of happiness revealed by our Lord in His promise to His disciples that where He was they should be also. 2. What the nature and degree of it is the Scripture has nowhere informed us; and, indeed, in our present state exact notions of it are impossible. 3. It is enough to know that to be with Christ is to be partakers of His glory. This is twofold. (1) Real but imperfect immediately upon death. (2) Complete after the resurrection.

II. THE MOTIVES THAT RECONCILED HIM TO A LONGER STAY. 1. He had not only a certain prospect of happiness in another life, but uncommon reasons to be weary of this. 2. But persecuted and discouraged as he was and would still be, his charity for the souls of men, and his zeal for his Master, prevailed with him to defer his own felicity. He was moved with compassion to the errors of a deluded world, and affected with the concern of a father for the happiness of his converts.

III. THE SUBMISSION HE EXPRESSES TO THE WISDOM AND APPOINTMENT OF GOD. He did not presume to make his own choice. He knew (ver. 25) that God had determined he should abide, and therefore he cheerfully acquiesces in the Divine will, and is as eager to promote the glory of God in one world as to partake of it in another.

Application: 1. The prospect of being with Christ is as much ours as it was his. 2. This prospect is a powerful support against death, and a great encouragement to duty. 3. The prospect, however, of being of use to Christ here should beget a willingness to postpone our departure that Christ's will may be done. (*J. Rogers, D.D.*)

A strait betwixt two:—I. CONTINUANCE. Continued life meant—1. Continued labour. Nothing which God makes is without a work to do. "All things are full of labour." To God's moral creatures is given the sublime privilege that not blindly through the action of material laws, but consciously and by resolutions of their own, they may fulfil the end of their existence. (1) To work, then, according to the faculties and opportunities which God has given us is our duty. (2) Work is the law of the new life in Christ Jesus. "Son, go work." (3) The manifestation of God's life is holy, beneficent activity. Here is our example. (4) The highest conceivable honour for God's creatures is to be "labourers together with Him." (5) As this is duty, so is it the direction in which the love of Christ constraineth us to turn our energies. (6) But what if through illness, &c., a Christian cannot work? Then he works by the influence of his resignation and his prayers. 2. "Fruit of labour"—success in the work to which God calls him. (1) As a rule honest, hearty labour of every kind succeeds more or less. Yet there are often failures. Shipwreck overwhelms the vessel, or fire consumes the factory, or disease enfeebles. The Christian, when calamities of this kind overtake him, recognizes in them a reminder that there is higher wealth and nobler work than that which has to do with this world. (2) In

the spiritual sphere there is always "fruit of labour," though very often neither as nor when, nor where we look for it. All earnest effort for personal spiritual advancement succeeds, for "this is the will of God." Fruit of this kind is yielded, too, by every Christian effort to benefit others. With regard to the direct effort of Christian labour for the good of others, even where there is little or no visible fruit, still the conscientious worker has abundant ground of encouragement. Christian labourers casually learn, long after, of spiritual good done when they complained of labouring in vain. The seed may long lie inactive. 3. This, then, is what Paul sees to counterbalance the influence of the reflection "to die is gain." II. DEPARTURE. 1. One grand thought. Paul's wish was that by departure he should be with Christ. 2. Some Christians have held that the intermediate state is one of sleep. But our Lord's declaration to the dying thief disposes of that; and had it been Paul's view he would have counted it better to remain with Christ here. 3. To depart and be with Christ was "better by very far" than remaining in a world of ignorance, and sin, and trouble. III. THE STRAIT BETWEEN THE TWO. 1. Of struggle between liking and a sense of duty every soul of any strength and nobleness has experience every day. 2. Paul was led to choose the less desirable personally out of love to Christ and His cause. 3. The principle on which this choice was based is that God, having a plan of life for each of His people, no one of them will pass away so long as any work remains for them to do. No Christian dies prematurely. (R. Johnson, LL. B.)

Vers. 23-24. I am in a strait betwixt two.—Christ is best: or, St. Paul's strait:—I. ST. PAUL'S STRAIT. His soul was as a ship between two winds, tossed up and down; as iron between two loadstones, drawn first one way and then another. The people of God are often in great straits. Some things are so exceedingly bad that without deliberation we ought to abominate them; some things so good that we should immediately cling to them; others again are of a doubtful nature, requiring our best consideration, as Paul's here. II. ONE GROUND OF THIS STRAIT WAS HIS PRESENT DESIRE. 1. I have a desire. When there is anything set before the soul having a magnetical force to draw out the motives thereof we call that a desire, even though for the present the soul desires it not. This desire was—(1) Spiritual. (2) It came from a taste of sweetness in communion with Christ. (3) Constant. "I have," I carry it about with me. (4) Efficacious, not the will of a sluggard, but one which carried him through death itself. 2. I desire to depart. (1) There must be a parting from the enjoyment of the creature, from the body, from friends. (2) There was to be a departing also. Here we cannot stay long; away we must; we are for another place (Psa. xc. 2). Paul labours to sweeten so harsh a thing by comfortable expressions of it—sleep, going home, &c. 3. I desire to be with Christ. (1) Why doth he not say heaven? Because heaven is not heaven without Christ, but He is the heaven of heaven. Every creature is best in its own element; Christ is the element of the Christian. If, therefore, death is a passage to Him, what is there in it to be feared? (1 Cor. iii. 22). (2) There is none but a Christian who can desire death, for to be with Christ is perfect holiness. 4. The consummation of this desire would be far better than anything or everything else. God reserves the best for the last. The Christian is happy in life, happier in death, happiest in heaven. 5. How shall we attain this desire? Let us carry ourselves as Paul did (chap. iii. 20). (1) He had his conversation in heaven. (2) He loosed his affection from all earthly things (Gal. vi. 14). (3) He laboured to keep a good conscience in all things (Acts xxiv. 16; Heb. x. 22). (4) He had the assurance that he was in Christ by his union with Him (Gal. ii. 19). (5) He had an art of sweetening the thoughts of death, by regarding it as the passage to Christ and life. III. THE OTHER GROUND OF HIS STRAIT WAS HIS PRESENT CONVICTION that to stay was better for them. 1. The lives of worthy men are very needful for the Church of God, because God's method is to bless man by man. (1) By their counsel and direction (Prov. vii. 21). (2) By their reformation of abuses. (3) By their good example (chap. ii. 15). (4) By their prayers. 2. Holy men can deny themselves and their own best good for the Church's benefit. Because—(1) They have the spirit of love, and love seeketh not her own. (2) The Spirit of Christ who minded not His own things (1 Cor. x. 24). 3. Use. (1) Oh that we may have this Spirit to set us a work to do good while we are here. (2) Set loving hearts full of inventions how to glorify God and do good to man. (3) Labour to have sufficiency that you may have ability to do good. (R. Sibbes, D.D.) *Willing to wait, but ready to go:—*I. THE TWO DESIRES. 1. To depart and be with Christ. This

desire is composed of two parts—a vestibule somewhat dark and forbidding, through which the pilgrim must pass, and a temple unspeakably glorious, which is to be his home. (1) The exodus from this life by dissolution of the body. The band that knits body to soul is broken at death, and the soul escapes. (2) The company to which the exodus more directly leads is Christ. Paul knew of no place of purgation. Wherever and whatever the place of saved spirits, one thing is certain—Christ is there. Christians need not care for more. Christ's presence is needed for human happiness. Heaven would not be heaven, however otherwise glorious, without a human Christ to fasten the affections upon. 2. To abide in the flesh. (1) It is a natural and lawful desire. God has placed and visited us here, and given us something to do. This is a point of great importance. Some rebelliously cling to life without respect to God's will; others are troubled because in illness they discover a desire for longer days. Let the love of life remain, only get it so sanctified that at the appointed time it may cease. II. THE CHRISTIAN BALANCED EVENLY BETWEEN THE TWO DESIRES. 1. To depart was far better. 2. To stay was more needful. 3. The desire to be with Christ does not make life unhappy, because it is balanced by the pleasure of working for Christ; the desire to work for Christ does not make the approach of dissolution painful, because it is balanced by the expectation of being soon ever with the Lord. 4. These two constitute the spiritual man. They are the right and left sides of the new creature in Christ Jesus. Where both grow equally, there is no halting; where both have grown well, the step is steady and the progress great. III. PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. This text is sufficient to destroy the whole fabric of Romish prayer to departed saints. 2. The chief use of a Christian in the world is to do good. 3. You cannot be effectively useful to those who are in need on earth unless you hold by faith and hope to Christ on high. 4. Living hope of going to be with Christ is the only anodyne which can neutralize the pain of parting with those who are dear to us in the body. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *The attractions of heaven checked by the claims of earth:—*I. HAVING A DESIRE TO DEPART. A disciple of Christ may have a desire to depart. 1. For the sake of having the departing over. This is more terrible in prospect than in realization or in retrospect. We shrink from the strangeness of a new habitation however glorious; from the dark valley, however bright the yonder light. 2. For the sake of heaven's attractions as—(1) A place. It is Paradise regained. Beauty smiles there, life reigns there, the blessing of God is enshrined there. There is no night, no withering cold or scorching heat. (2) A state, sorrowless, deathless, curseless, sinless. 3. For the sake of the objects of our holiest affections—our Father, our glorified Saviour, unfallen spirits, redeemed souls. 4. For the sake of the realization of our highest hopes. The weary look for rest, the hindered worker for unfettered action, the sad for gladness, the solitary for congenial society, the fearful for safety, the doubtful for certainty. II. THERE WERE CLAIMS WHICH HELD PAUL TO EARTH. 1. Had Paul been a husband and a father he could have turned to his household and said, "for you." But his only tie to earth was God's Church. There is a peculiar connection between the man who has been the means of another's conversion or spiritual progress which can never be dissolved and which no other can take up. Paul, therefore, desired to live to instruct and comfort his converts, guide the whole Church, and win souls for Christ. 2. This double attraction perplexed him and it was a good sign, a sign of life and high sensibility. Those whose religious life is monotonous have not much life in them. (1) A man of the world is in no such strait. He is drawn but in one direction; by many things it may be, gold, honour, treasures, but only earthward. (2) The hypocrite is in no such strait. His straits are connected with keeping on his mask and his cloak. (3) The lukewarm and declining Christian has no such straits. 3. This perplexity only existed until the will of God was expressed to him. As soon as he knew that he said, "I am ready; the time of my departure is at hand." Conclusion: The right state is to be attracted by Christ, wherever Christ is, in His Church on earth or His Church in heaven; and to the place in which we can most glorify Him. (*S. Martin.*) *The desire of the apostle; yet his perplexity:—*Nothing is more unpleasant than uncertainty and indecision. Shall I take a journey or not? Sometimes the case is very important; marriage, e.g. What a strait was Jacob in between starvation and letting Benjamin go to Egypt, and David with his three things to choose. Paul was now in a strait not between two evil but between two good things. It was the strait of a man in a garden between a peach and a nectarine; a rose and a lily. He was between living and dying; but Christ was connected with both; whether he should enjoy Christ in heaven or serve Him on earth. I. HIS REPRESENTATION OF DEATH. Consider—1.

its nature—departure. (1) The idea may be exemplified by the traveller's departure from the inn, a prisoner's from his dungeon. (2) By so calling it Paul showed that man is a compound being. Cowper does not inscribe on the tomb of his dog, "Here lies the body," but "Here lies poor Dansy." There is a spirit in man. (3) This departure was the inlet to future blessedness. "To be with Christ." So heaven will be a social state. If Socrates could feel pleasure at the thought of being with Musæus, and other worthies who had lived before him, what must be the attraction of the believer in Jesus. 2. The preference he gives it. "Far better" than what? (1) Than to be stoned in the streets of Corinth; to fight with the beasts of Ephesus, &c.? That would be saying very little. (2) It would also be saying very little if far better than his temporal mercies. There are things now that the believer deems far better. (3) It would be far better than the enjoyment of the best and most spiritual things below. II. HIS DESIRE AFTER IT. 1. The desire of death can never be natural. 2. The fear of death is as natural as hunger and sleep; and there is no evil in it. If anything can raise us above it it must be supernatural. 3. There may be more who feel this desire than you are aware of. 4. Christians have more of this readiness to die as they approach death. III. THE COUNTER-BALANCE BY WHICH HE WAS WILLING TO REMAIN. The apostle shows the sense he had of his own importance, and the self-denial he was willing to exercise in order to be useful. Humility does not consist in ignorance. (*W. Jay.*) *Life more our business than death*.—At a private meeting of friends George Whitefield, after adverting to the difficulties attending the gospel ministry, said that he was weary with the burdens of the day, and declared it to be his great consolation that in a short time his work would be done, and he should depart and be with Christ. He then appealed to the ministers present, and asked if they had not entirely similar feelings. They generally assented, with the exception of Mr. Tennent. On seeing this, Mr. Whitefield, tapping him on the knee, said: "Well, Brother Tennent, you are the oldest man among us; do you not rejoice to think that your time is so near at hand when you will be called home?" Mr. Tennent bluntly answered that he had no wish about it. Being pressed for some opinion more definite and decided, he then added: "I have nothing to do with death. My business is to live as long as I can, and as well as I can, and serve my Master as faithfully as I can until He shall think proper to call me home." It proved a word in season to the great evangelist, helping him more calmly and patiently to hold on his way. (*J. L. Nye.*) I. THE SAINTS ARE SOMETIMES IN STRAITS (2 Sam. xxiv. 14). II. THEY MIND NOT THEIR OWN BUT THE GLORY OF GOD AND GOOD OF OTHERS (chap. ii. 21). III. THE TRULY PIOUS DESIRE TO DEPART AND BE WITH CHRIST. 1. What is it to depart? (2 Pet. i. 14; 2 Cor. v. 1). To go into the other world. 2. What to be with Christ? (1) To enjoy His presence (John xii. 26; xvii. 24). (2) To behold His glory (John xvii. 24; 1 Cor. xiii. 12). (3) To have communion with Him. 3. Why do they desire to be with Christ? Because—(1) They believe His promises (John xiv. 1-2). (2) Are convinced of the creature's vanity and Christ's excellency. (3) Love Christ above all things (Phil. iii. 8-9; Psal. xlii. 1-2). (4) Long to be eased of their sins (Rom. vii. 24). (5) To be out of the devil's reach (1 Pet. v. 8). (6) They have foretastes of heaven already (1 Pet. i. 8). (7) This is the end of all their labours (1 Pet. i. 9). 4. It is better to be with Christ than here (Matt. xvii. 4). We shall have better—(1) Souls (Heb. xii. 23). (2) Bodies (Phil. iii. 21). (3) Company (Heb. xii. 22-23; John xvii. 24). (4) Employments (Rev. vii. 11-12). (5) Honours (John xii. 26). (6) Riches (Matt. vi. 19-20). (7) Pleasures. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *St. Paul's doubt and desire*.—I. PAUL IN HIS STRAIT. He would be with Christ and yet with the Philip-pians; he would be dissolved and yet live. He resolved, however, at last against himself. 1. For the glory of God; the prime motive of our Christian obedience. We must neither live nor die but to God's glory. 2. For the good of the brethren, wherein God's glory is greatly manifested (2 Cor. xii. 15). 3. This was only possible to a man already in Christ, and imbued by His Spirit. 4. If the same mind be in us which was in Paul we should look upon our calling as Christians as the most delightful yet most troublesome calling. II. PAUL'S DESIRE. 1. The desire carries nothing in it that hath any opposition to the will of God. It is not wrought in us by impatience or sense of injuries as is the case of Stoics. 2. This desire is from heaven, heavenly (Heb. iv. 9; 2 Tim. iv. 8). We love Christ and would be where His honour dwelleth. 3. This desire—(1) is but for a dissolving of the whole into its parts, that the better part may have the better portion at once and the whole by and by. (2) Brings us to Christ, and is therefore (3) the fittest object for our desire to fasten upon. (*A. Farindon, B.D.*) *Paul's desire to depart*.—I. THE

APOSTLE'S DESCRIPTION OF DEATH. 1. Negatively. He does not call it—(1) An arrest. In the death of the wicked the sheriff's officer of justice lays his clay-cold hand upon the man's shoulder and he is a prisoner for ever: "but who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (2) A plunge. The wicked stand upon the precipice of a yawning and bottomless gulf and their unwilling spirits must take a desperate leap. The believer climbs upwards. 2. Positively. He calls it—(1) A departure, like a vessel homeward bound. (2) Departure to Christ. (a) We shall see Him as He is. (b) We shall commune with Him. (c) We shall enjoy full fruition of Him. **II. THE APOSTLE'S DESIRE.** 1. Some men are scared by it. 2. Others with a seared conscience meet it with an idiot resignation. 3. The apostle panted to be gone: as the captain with his rich freight longs for the harbour, as the conqueror longs for his crown. **III. THE APOSTLE'S REASONS.** 1. Others besides he have longed to die. (1) The suicide mad from life's misery leaps from one evil to a myriad. (2) The so-called philosopher, sick of mankind. Not so Paul, he was neither coward nor man-hater. (3) Those who think that by getting out of the world they will escape their disappointments and suffering. 2. Paul felt this desire because he knew that being with Christ—(1) He would be clean rid of sin. (2) That he would meet his brethren in the faith who had gone before; (3) That he would be with Christ, and these words have all heaven condensed in them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *For ever with the Lord:—I. THE APOSTLE'S CERTAINTY RESPECTING THE DISEMBODED STATE.* 1. Paul was an eminently conscientious man who would not say what he did not believe to be true, and a man of well-balanced reason, logic preponderating among his faculties. 2. Now this Paul was convinced of a future state. He did not believe in purgatory, much less that the soul sleeps until the resurrection. 3. What made this conscientious and collected man come to this conclusion? I suppose he would have replied first that he had been converted by a sight of the Lord Jesus. He was sure he had seen Him, and that He had come from somewhere and gone somewhere; and recollecting the prayer, "I will that they be with me where I am," he was quite certain that as soon as saints died they were with Christ. 4. Remember this judicious and truthful witness had other distinct evidence of the disembodied state. He had been caught up into Paradise. It was, therefore, not merely matter of belief but of observation. 5. Paul had no doubt then, nor need you. If you believe in Him there is no condemnation, and if so, no separation (Rom. viii.) either in this life or that which is to come. **II. THE APOSTLE'S IDEA OF THAT STATE.** 1. It is a one-sided idea and almost a one-worded description: an inclusive idea, for it takes in all the heaven which the largest mind can conceive. 2. Being with Christ is so great a thing that he mentioned it alone. (1) Because his love was so concentrated on Christ that he could think of nothing else in this connection. (2) He was persuaded that heaven could not be heaven if Christ was not there. It would be day without the sun, existence without life, seeing without light, the heavens without their stars. Christ is heaven and heaven is Christ. 3. What is it to be with Christ? (1) It is to be with Him—heaven is not merely what comes out of being with Him, His company itself is heaven. (2) It is to have a clearer vision of Him than is possible now, and this vision will be ravishing. (3) Brighter knowledge. Here we only know in part. (4) More intimate intercourse. (5) Unbroken fellowship. (6) A share of His glory. **III. THE APOSTLE'S ESTIMATE OF THIS DISEMBODED STATE.** "Very far better." 1. St. Paul does not claim for this state that it is the believer's highest condition, because one-half of him is left behind. The fullness of our glory is the resurrection. Yet for one-half of his manhood to be with Christ is far better than for the whole of his being to be here under the best possible conditions, not merely of worldly wealth, &c.—he had got above all that—but of spiritual excellence and blessing. 2. Concerning our departed friends, then, how can we sorrow? 3. With regard to ourselves what is there to fear? 4. All this points to the fountain of bliss while we are here. The nearer we get to Christ the more we shall participate in what makes the joy of heaven. (*Ibid.*) *Better to be with Christ than here:—I. WHAT IS IT TO BE WITH CHRIST?* It implies—1. Our being where He is (John xiv. 2-4). 2. Our enjoying what He enjoys. (1) Clear knowledge of God (John xvii. 3; 1 Cor. xiii. 12). (2) Perfect love. (3) Eternal joy (chap. iv. 1). **II. HOW IS IT BETTER?** 1. In its immunities. (1) From sin (1 Cor. xv. 30). (a) Errors in judgment (1 Cor. xiii. 12). (b) Disorder in affections. (c) Infirmary in actions. (2) From misery (Rev. xxi. 4). 2. In its enjoyments, which are better; because—(1) More real (Prov. xxiii. 5). (2) More spiritual (Matt. xi. 28-29). (3) More satisfying (Psa. xvi. 11; xvii. 15). (4) More certain (Isa. lv. 3). (5) More lasting

(2 Cor. v. 1). III. *Uses.* Labour to get to Christ. 1. *Means.* (1) Repent (Luke xiii. 3). (2) Believe on Christ (Acts xvi. 31). (3) Labour after true grace, without which you shall not (Heb. xii. 14), and you cannot enjoy God. (4) Use the means appointed (Rom. x. 17). 2. *Motives.* (1) Labour after it. Consider—(a) It is possible. (b) It is desired by God (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). (c) You will repent ere long unless you do. (2) Seek it first. (a) It is a thing of the greatest concern (Luke x. 42). (b) It is the only thing needful (Luke x. 42). (3) Labour after it now (Psa. xc. 8-9). Consider—(a) Your time is short. (b) The work is great. (c) You know not when you will be called to account. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Paul and Voltaire*:—I was lately looking over Voltaire's correspondence with one of his literary female acquaintances, and no less than three times in his letters does he say, "I dread death and hate life." Was it so with the Apostle Paul? Did he dread death? What is his language—"I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Did he hate life? "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you, and, having this confidence," &c. (*W. Jay.*) *Strait*:—From the word strait employed in our translation we are apt to take up the notion of pain and difficulty. This is not the idea which the apostle intended to express. Literally the word signifies to be between two, and held by both at the same time. In ordinary circumstances, and in the present case especially, this is pleasanter and safer than to be held by only one. This strait is the happiest condition in which a living man can be. It is not a position of distraction from which he would fain escape, but a position of solid repose. To be grasped and drawn by either of these emotions alone would bend and break a man; to be attracted equally by both produces a delicious equilibrium. The spiritual fact may be explained by a material example. Suppose a man is standing aloft upon a pedestal where he finds room to plant his feet and no more. Suppose that one neighbour stands near him on the right hand, and another near him on the left. If one of these grasp and draw him, his posture immediately becomes uneasy and dangerous. Under the strain he does not keep his footing easily, and will not keep it long. But if both should grasp him, either seizing a hand, and draw with equal force in opposite directions, the result would be an erect attitude and an easy position. Such precisely in the spiritual department is the equilibrium of a believer who is held and drawn by both these desires at once. It is the strait betwixt two that makes him easy. Either of these desires wanting the other would distress him in proportion to its strength. On the one hand, a desire to abide in the flesh without a balancing desire to depart and to be with Christ, is a painful condition. The weight hanging on one side racks the person all over. Most men are crushed in this manner all their days. The Redeemer knows this sorrow and provides relief. One specific design of His coming was "to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." As soon as one of these tremblers is begotten again into a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the balance is restored and deliverance effected. On the other hand, the converse is equally true, although not equally common. To experience a desire to depart, unbalanced by a desire to abide in the flesh, is also a painful experience. Many Christians pass through at least a short period of this unevenness and uneasiness before they are set free. Whatever may be the immediate causes which have made life wearisome to a Christian, whenever the desire to abide dies out, the desire to depart distracts him. It may be that most of us at present would gladly bargain for such a state of mind at the close of life, as being the safest; but it is, notwithstanding, and not the less a painful state of mind. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Death, a departure*:—I shall never forget the cry of the late Rev. Dr. De Witt, of New York, as he stood at the grave of his wife. After the body had been lowered to its resting-place, that venerable man of God leaned over the open space and said: "Farewell, my honoured, faithful, beloved wife. The bond that bound us is severed, thou art in glory, I am still on earth, but we shall meet again. Farewell, farewell!" (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Heaven our home*:—As a home the believer delights to think of it. Thus when, lately bending over a dying saint, and expressing our sorrow to see him laid so low, with the radiant countenance rather of one who had just left heaven, than of one about to enter it, he raised and clasped his hands, and exclaimed in ecstasy, "I am going home." Happy the family of which God is the Father, Jesus the elder Brother, and all the "saints in light" are brethren. (*T. Guthrie.*) *Longing for home*:—I have heard a story of the celebrated Mr. William Dawson, who used to call himself "Billy" Dawson, much to the point. On one occasion, when he and some other Methodist friends were spending the

evening together, a dear friend of mine happened to be present, and heard what passed. They were praying that Mr. Dawson's life might be spared for many years to come, that such an earnest man might be kept in the Church for the next twenty or thirty years. At last, as they were just in the middle of prayer, William Dawson said, "Lord, don't hear 'em: I want to get my work done, and go home; I don't want to be here any longer than there is needs be;" and the brethren stopped their prayers, thunderstruck as they witnessed his emotion. Now I believe that feeling will often pass over the earnest working Christian. "Oh," saith he, "I am not lazy; I am not idle; but still, I would like to get my work done." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Death a gain:*—The most you can do to a good man is to persecute him; and the worst that persecution can do is to kill him. And killing a good man is as bad as it would be to spite a ship by launching it. The soul is built for heaven, and the ship for the ocean, and blessed be the hour that gives both to the true element. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The desire to depart:*—As birds in the hour of transmigration feel the impulse of southern lands, and gladly spread their wings for the realm of light and bloom, so may we, in the death hour, feel the sweet solicitations of the life beyond, and joyfully soar from the chill and shadow of earth to fold our wings and sing in the summer of an eternal heaven! (*Ibid.*) *To depart is to be with Christ:*—The Rev. Alexander Fisher, of Dunfermline, an excellent young minister, in the afternoon of the day on which he died, inquired what the hour was, and on being informed, said, "What would you think if I were in heaven to-night?" It was answered, "Then you will be with your Saviour, and see Him face to face." His pale emaciated countenance seemed to beam with delight, and his faltering lips uttered, "Glory, glory, glory!" *Ready for heaven:*—A little child was playing with her mother, and they were talking about heaven. The mother had been telling of the joy and glories of that happy world. The matchless beauty of the angels, the golden streets and pearly gates, and the exultant song of redemption. "There is no sickness in those bright realms, no pain, no death, no sorrow, nor sighing, nor tears, no sin; for all will be pure and holy." "Oh, dear mother!" exclaimed the little child, in her amazement and delight, "let us all go now!" "We must wait a little," said the mother, "wait until God shall send for us." "Well, dear mother," responded the child, in a tone of disappointment, "if we can't start now, at any rate, let us pack up and be ready!" There is a whole sermon in that one sentence: "Let us pack up and be ready!" Oh, what a world of difference between being ready and unready! (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *Christ, heaven's supreme attraction:*—Being with Christ is so great a thing that he mentioned it alone, because his love was so concentrated upon Christ that he could think of nothing else in connection with heaven. There is a wife here, perhaps, and her husband is in India. He has been long away, and the years of his forced absence have been weary to her. She has had loving messages from him and kind letters, but often has she sighed, and her heart has looked out of the windows towards the east, yearning for his return; but now she has received a letter entreating her to go out to her husband, and without hesitation she has resolved to go. Now, if you ask her what she is going to India for, the reply will be, "I am going to my husband." But she has a brother there, she has many old friends there, her husband has a handsome estate there. Yes, there may be other inducements to make the voyage, but to be with her beloved is the master object of her journey. She is going to the man she loves with all her soul, and she is longing for the country, whatever that country may be, because he is there. It is so with the Christian, only enhanced in a tenfold degree. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Depart:*—The word "depart" means strictly to take to pieces. The living man is contemplated as a complex machine, and it is intimated that at death its joints are loosed, and the whole is broken up into its constituent elements. This life in the body is like a watch. By food, and drink, and air, it is wound up daily, and so kept going. At last the machinery, by gradual wear and tear, or by some sudden accident, is brought to a stand. Then it is taken down—taken to pieces—in order that it may be purified and perfected, and set agoing again, not to measure then the changing seasons of time, but to move on, without waste or weariness, in a limitless eternity. More immediately, the dissolution or untying probably refers to the separation of soul and body. The band that knit them together is broken at death. The soul escapes, and the body, meantime, returns to dust. In this view the works of the watch never stand still. When life from God was first breathed into that immortal being, it was wound up, once for all, to go for

ever. At the shock of death it is severed from its case of flesh. Outer casement, and figured dial, and pointed hands, all remain with us, and all stand still. But these never were the moving springs. These were shells to protect the tender from injury where the road was rough, and indices to make the movements palpable to bodily sense; but the vital motion of the departed spirit continues uninterrupted, unimpeded, in a region where no violence is dreaded, and no sign to the senses is required. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*)

Ver. 25. *Having this confidence.*—This “I know” of the apostle has something like its parallel in that of Luther, when his friend and true yoke-fellow, Melancthon, lay at the point of death. The reformer, it is said, after earnest prayer approached the sick-bed, and uttered these prophetic words, “Cheer up, Philip; you are not going to die.” Luther was in no sense prophesying, but he had been praying; and in answer to his prayer the conviction was irresistibly borne in upon his mind and heart, that his colleague, for whom so much work was waiting, would yet live to do it. What, then, of personal conviction Luther asserted about another, Paul here asserts about himself. We thus see that blended humility and trustfulness, more especially in strongly emotional natures, can dare sometimes to use the bold language of assured conviction even in regard to issues which are to us uncertain, for they are with God alone. But it is to be noticed that this language never can be used when merely personal or private ends are in view. When Paul said “I know” in this case, he was indeed alluding to his own future, but he was contemplating it in relation not to his own individual interests, but solely to his friends’ “progress and joy in the faith,”—their advancement in the inner life through strengthening faith, and their joy, as overflowing out of that faith, in their outward life of Christian service. All this would be theirs by his presence restored to them for a time, more than by any letter, however tender, he could write to them. (*J. Hutchison, D.D.*)

Vers. 27-30. *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.*—A call to a fourfold manifestation of spiritual life:—I. To HOLINESS (ver. 27). As if he had said, I have one dominating wish in reference to you. 1. It is well to know what God’s princes wish for us. The noblest desire one man can cherish for another is that he may be like Jesus. 2. There is but one ideal life in the Church. But here is a difficulty: how can the lowest copy the highest? Would it not have been wiser to have set forth a man who excelled in one moral feature, and to have said, “Transcribe that,” and so on until all the graces had been gradually acquired? Is not the setting forth of absolute perfection exorbitant and demanding too much from the helpless sinner? Let us see. What does moral perfection begin in? It begins in the disposition, the will, the heart. If you are urged to escape from polar winter to tropical summer, it is not meant that the journey is to be accomplished at a stride, but step by step. When a child is required to be perfect as a musician it is not intended that in one day his uncrafty fingers should liberate the angel strains. So with the growth of the acorn into the oak. And so when our Saviour tells us to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect He means that we are to grow in grace. In all our growing and striving Christ Himself is with us, and His grace is all-sufficient. II. To UNANIMITY (ver. 27). This is not monotony. The root of true unity is oneness in the love and service of Christ. Christendom is in reality one, though apparently many. The coat is of many colours, the heart is one. This is particularly seen in the time of threatened danger. The armies of defence have never come from any particular section of the Church. How illogical the decision to have nothing to do with religion because the Church is divided. There are so many styles of building, and so many modifications of those styles, some Doric, others classic—are people so perplexed with these varieties as to renounce architecture altogether and resolved to reside in the open air? Try the same with clothing, patriotism, business. Do men give up commerce because some tradesmen are insolvent? Do you give up housekeeping because some chimneys smoke? III. To COURAGE (ver. 28). Timidity is a symptom of moral feebleness, an impediment in the path of moral progress. Timidity on the part of one may dishearten the courage of a multitude. It arises from distrust in God. How many a man of noble powers and enlarged culture, for want of strength in a crisis, the courage to utter the decisive word, fails and trembles, and becomes the prey of the mean. IV. FEARLESSNESS IN THE STRIFE IS TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH MAGNANIMITY IN ENDURANCE (vers. 29-30). The strong in heart are called to suffer. Suffering is an educa-

tion, a means of grace. Think of the hidden and silent heroism that is going on day by day. How many a man otherwise mighty fails in suffering! (*J. Parker D.D.*) *Christian citizenship*:—There was one drawback to the apostle's delight in thinking of the Philippians. It was not doctrinal unsoundness, or denial of his authority, but the spirit of social rivalry and partizanship. This he hints at by the recurrence of the word "all" in the former part of this chapter, and he now deals with it in a most delicate but effective way. He shows, in a manner which they as Roman citizens were quick to understand, the leading duties of gospel citizenship and their enforcing motives. **I. THE DUTIES OF THIS CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP.** 1. Stand firmly by the charter of your citizenship—the gospel—all of you, all together. Be a compact body. The apostle puts stress upon the Christian spirit as the outcome of the Christian faith, and does not dream, like some recent men, that the one can exist apart from the other. 2. Be unitedly zealous for the common faith. Zeal for the truth is not only to impel them to stand by the truth, but to make it known. There is a zeal which begins and ends with self, or which will show itself in its own way only, and a zeal which spends itself not so much against the common foe as against those of their own party who differ in minor things. What the apostle commends is a right kind of zeal rightly directed. 3. Be bold in facing your foe. The opposition was formidable—Jews and Gentiles singly and combined; the attack was likely to be sudden. **II. THE MOTIVES BY WHICH THEY ARE ENFORCED.** 1. An attention to these duties attests their true apprehension and enjoyment of Christianity itself (chap. ii. 1). 2. The power of Divine love. 3. Obedience to those duties will bear witness to the reality of their communion with God. 4. It is also thus a true testimony to the compassion and tenderness which Christ alone puts into men's hearts. 5. Doing thus you will make my cup of gladness run over. (*J. J. Goadby.*) *Citizens of heaven*:—The meaning is, Play the citizen in a manner worthy of the gospel. Paul does not mean, of course, Discharge your civic duties as Christian men, though some Christian Englishmen need that reminder; but their city was the heavenly Jerusalem. **I. KEEP FRESH THE SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE MOTHER CITY.** Paul was writing from Rome, where he might see how the consciousness of being a Roman gave dignity to a man. He would kindle a similar feeling in Christians. 1. We belong to another polity than that with which we are connected by the bonds of sense. 2. Therefore it is a great part of Christian discipline to keep a vivid consciousness that there is an unseen order of things. The future life is present to an innumerable company. 3. There is a present connection between all Christians and the heavenly city. The life of Christian men on earth and in heaven is fundamentally the same; in principle, motive, taste, aim, &c. As Philippi was to Rome, so is earth to heaven, a colony on the outskirts of the empire, ringed round by barbarians, and separated by seas, but keeping open its communications, and one in citizenship. 4. Our true *habitat* is elsewhere; so let us set our affections on things above. The descendants of the original settlers in our colonies talk still of coming to England as going "home," though they were born in Australia and have lived there all their lives. 5. How need that feeling of detachment from the present sadden our spirits or weaken our interest in things around us? To recognize our separation from the order of things in which we "move" because we "have our being" in that majestic unseen order makes life great, not small. **II. LIVE BY THE LAWS OF THE CITY.** 1. The Philippian colonists were governed by the code of Rome. They owed no obedience to the law of the province of Macedonia. So Christian men are not to be governed by maxims and rules of conduct which prevail in the province, but from the capital. 2. The gospel is not merely to be believed, but to be obeyed. Like some of the ancient municipal charters, the grant of privileges and proclamation of freedom is also the sovereign code which imposes duties and shapes life. A gospel of laziness and mere exemption from hell is not Paul's gospel. 3. That law is all-sufficient. In Christ we have the realized ideal, the flawless example, and instead of a thousand precepts, all duty is resolved into one—be like Christ. 4. Live worthy of the gospel, then. How grand the unity and simplicity thus breathed into our duties. 5. Such an all-comprehensive precept is not a mere toothless generality. Let a man try honestly to shape his life by it, and he will find soon enough how close it grips him. The tiny round of the dewdrop is shaped by the same laws which mould the giant planet. 6. It is an exclusive commandment, shutting out obedience to other codes, however common or fashionable. We are governed from home, and give no submission to provincial authorities. Never mind what people

say about you, or what may be their maxims or ways. The censures or praises of men need not move us. We report to headquarters, and subordinate estimates need be nothing to us. We appeal unto Cæsar. III. FIGHT FOR THE ADVANCE OF THE DOMINIONS OF THE CITY. 1. Like the armed colonies which Rome had on her frontier, who received their bits of land on condition of holding the border against the enemy, and pushing it forward a league or two, so Christian soldiers are set down to be "wardens of the marches," and to (1) stand fast—maintaining our ground and repelling all assaults. (2) This successful resistance is to be in one spirit, inasmuch as all resistance depends on our spirits being rooted in God's Spirit, in vital union with whom we may be knit together in a unity which shall oppose a granite breakwater to the inrushing tide of opposition. (3) We are to carry the war onwards, striving together for the faith of the gospel. (4) There is to be discipline and compact organization like that of the Prætorian guards. (5) The cause for which we are to fight is the faith of the gospel—either its sum and substance or the subjective act of trust in it—to unitedly contend for its growing power in our own heart and the hearts of others. 2. Such work is ever needed, and never more than now, when a wave of unbelief seems passing over us, and when material comfort is so attractive. Close your ranks for the fight. IV. BE SURE OF VICTORY. 1. "Terrified" refers to a horse shying or plunging at some object. It is generally things half-seen, and mistaken for something dreadful, that makes horses shy; it is usually a half-look at adversaries and a mistaken estimate of their strength that makes Christians afraid. Go up to your fears and speak to them, and, as ghosts are said to do, they will generally fade away. 2. Such courage is based on a sure hope. "Our citizenship is in heaven." The outlying colony knows that the Emperor is marching to its relief. (*A. MacLaren, D.D.*) *Ministerial solicitude*.—I. THE APPROPRIATE METAPHOR. The Church is a city, set on a hill. The Divine mind has expended infinite treasures on it. It is a masterpiece of perfection. Its foundation is Christ. 1. We expect to see order in a city: so there must be laws and government in the Church. 2. There is to be beauty in a city: so all excellence should be in the Church. 3. In a city we expect commerce; so the Church is to send her merchandise to all parts. 4. In an imperial city we look for the residence of the sovereign, and this is the comfort of the Church—"The Lord of hosts is with us." 5. As it is a city, it is a place of chartered privileges—the free gifts of the reigning monarch. II. THE GENERAL DIRECTION. What does this venerable citizen say to his fellow-citizens? It is not the profession of citizenship that will avail. 1. With regard to your principles: God gave His Son to die for you rebels; therefore you owe your lives to Him. 2. Let your conversation be as becometh the privileges of the gospel—how varied and rich they are. 3. Let it be as becometh the holy practice required by the gospel. "Let your light so shine," &c. III. THE PARTICULAR ENUMERATION. 1. Steadfastness. I never knew a man who was always changing whose piety was deep and sincere. Be steadfast in your attachment to (1) your own Church; (2) its doctrines; (3) its discipline. 2. Unity (1) of judgment; (2) of affection. 3. Energy and activity. (*T. Mortimer, M.A.*) *A minister's desire on behalf of his people*.—1. WE HAVE A DUTY. We are citizens of no mean city (chap. iii. 20; Heb. xii. 23). What an unspeakable privilege; our duty is to act up to it (Eph. iv. 1; 1 Thess. ii. 12). 1. Let it be seen in your life that you are men of other principles than those of the world. (1) By acting on other principles than those of ambition, ease, selfishness. (3) By being men of other habits (chap. iii. 18-19)—unworldly, spiritual: in the home, in business, &c. 2. Remember that the glory of the gospel is connected with the conversation of its professors. A treasure is entrusted to you; do not tarnish it, lose it, barter it. II. SOME PARTICULARS OF OUR DUTY SPECIFIED. "That ye stand fast." It is easy for a man to be obstinate and headstrong in maintaining his own opinions; but the difficulty is for a man to stand fast in the gospel, viz.—1. In one spirit—a steady union of affection (Acts i. 14; ii. 46), without jarring or discord. 2. In one spirit for the common faith. When a man's opinion about the things of the world is attacked, how ready he is to defend it, but what a cold indifference there is about Christian principles. III. THE DESIRE EXPRESSED FOR THIS GOSPEL CONVERSATION. "Only." Paul seems to have lost sight of other themes—only let me see this, and I shall be happy. This was comprehensive of everything else. (*T. Woodroffe.*) *Citizenship*.—(Text in conjunction with chap. iii. 20.) Paul was a Roman citizen. By virtue of this, he possessed rights, privileges, and immunities denied to strangers. He now turns it to spiritual account. I. TRUE BELIEVERS ARE CITIZENS OF HEAVEN. Here

they are strangers and pilgrims. Their thoughts and affections point to the heavenly Jerusalem. But they cannot say with Paul, "I was free born." Like the captain, "With a great sum they obtained this freedom" (1 Pet. i. 18-19). It is the believer's interest in Christ, the purchaser of his freedom, which constitutes him a citizen of heaven.

II. CITIZENS OF HEAVEN SHOULD REFLECT IN THEIR LIVES THE DIGNITY AND HOLINESS OF THEIR CITY. As royal children they must behave royally. We do not expect princely bearing in the pauper, and we look only for earthly mindedness in the citizens of earth. When Alexander was asked to run in the Olympic games, he replied, "I will if kings are to be my antagonists."

III. HEAVEN'S LAWS FOR THE LIFE OF ITS CITIZENS UPON EARTH ARE CONTAINED IN THE GOSPEL OF THEIR KING. The one great law of which all the rest are only particular applications is "Christ our life." "He left us an example."

IV. LIVES WHICH HARMONIZE AND ILLUSTRATE THESE LAWS ARE WORTHY OF THE HEAVEN TO WHICH THEY BELONG.

LESSONS:

1. Prize the privilege.
2. Study the laws.
3. Live the life.

(J. B. Norton.) *Conversation becoming the gospel*:—

I. THE GOSPEL IN—

1. The dignity which it confers. (1) What we are by nature—children of wrath, aliens, slaves of sin. (2) What we are by grace—children of God, citizens of heaven, kings and priests unto God.
2. The knowledge it communicates. (1) The mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh. (2) The "mystery of the gospel"—the union between Christ and His people. (3) The mystery connected with the resurrection. (4) The "mystery of iniquity." (5) The mystery of providence—"All things work together for good," &c. (6) The "mysteries of the kingdom."
3. The spirit it enjoins. Peace with God, joy, God's love, the manifestation of the mercy we enjoy, walking in love, blamelessly.

II. THE ATTENDANT ADVANTAGES.

1. Steadfastness. Changing circumstances, heresies, worldliness, try this stability.
2. Unity. (1) Every individual soldier must remember that he belongs to the army. (2) In order to this unity there must be personal consistency and individual value of the truth. "One mind," viz., that which was in Christ Jesus.
3. Mutual effort.
3. Zeal for the success of the truth. (1) Defending its purity. (2) Extending its blessings. (W. Cadman, M.A.)

Conversation becoming the gospel:—

I. WHAT IN THE GOSPEL MUST OUR CONVERSATION BECOME?

1. The doctrine of the gospel. Living as those who believe—(1) That Christ is the Son of God and man (John i. 14). (2) That He died for sin, even for ours; that He rose again, ascended, and will come again to judge the world.
2. The discipline of the gospel. That all things be done—(1) Decently and in order (1 Cor. xiv. 40).
- (2) In faith (Rom. xiv. 23).
- (3) In love (Eph. v. 2).
- (4) In humility (chap. iv. 1-2; Luke xvii. 10).
- (5) To the glory of God (1 Cor. x. 31; Matt. v. 16).
3. Our expectations from the gospel. Live as those who expect (1 John iii. 4)—(1) Pardon (Eph. i. 7). (2) Acceptance (Gal. ii. 16). (3) Peace with God (Rom. v. 1).
- (4) Joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. xiv. 16-17; 1 Pet. i. 8).
- (5) All the graces of the Spirit (1 Pet. ii. 9).
- (6) A joyful resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 52-53).
- (7) Eternal happiness.
4. Our profession of the gospel, for which we have these rules. (1) In departing from iniquity (2 Tim. ii. 19). (2) In being new creatures (2 Cor. v. 17).
- (3) In loving Christ above all things (Luke xiv. 26).
- (4) In denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following Christ (Matt. xiv. 24).
- (5) In bearing much fruit (John xv. 8).
- (6) In being holy in all manner of conversation (1 Pet. i. 15); in thought (Prov. xii. 5; Phil. iv. 8); in affections (Col. iii. 2); in words (James i. 26; Eph. iv. 29); in actions (Tit. ii. 11-12).
- (7) In loving one another (John xiii. 35).
- (8) In continuing to the end (John viii. 31).

II. WHY WALK AS BECOMETH THE GOSPEL?

1. Otherwise we are a shame to the gospel (Heb. vi. 6).
2. Enemies to Christ (Phil. iii. 18-19).
3. You will receive no benefit from the gospel (Heb. iv. 1-2).
4. The gospel will rise in judgment against you (John iii. 19).
5. But if you walk as becometh the gospel, all its promises shall be made good unto you (John i. 29, xiv. 2; Matt. xxv. 34).

III. WHAT CONVERSATION IS THAT WHICH BECOMETH THE GOSPEL?

1. Towards God. (1) A humble conversation (Eph. iv. 1-2; Matt. xi. 29).
- (2) Trustful. (3) Cheerful (chap. iv. 4).
- (4) Obedient. (5) Heavenly (chap. iii. 20).
2. Towards man. (1) Meek and lowly (Matt. xi. 29).
- (2) Loving (John xiii. 34-35).
- (3) Just (Matt. vii. 12).
- (4) Charitable (1 Tim. vi. 17-18).

IV. USE. Walk thus according to the gospel.

1. Motives. (1) This is most safe (Prov. x. 9).
- (2) Most profitable (1 Tim. vi. 18; James ii. 5).
- (3) Most honourable (1 Sam. ii. 30).
- (4) Most pleasant (Prov. iii. 17).
- (5) Most necessary (Luke x. 42) to happiness (Heb. xii. 14).
2. Means. (1) Search the Scriptures. (2) Frequent ordinances (Rom. x. 17).
- (3) Be much in prayer (James i. 5).
- (4) Meditate often (chap. iv. 8).
- (5) Live above your bodies (1 Cor.

ix. 27). (*Bishop Beveridge.*) *Conversation becoming the gospel*.—I. A CONVERSATION BECOMING THE GOSPEL, MUST BE WISE, FOR THE GOSPEL IS A SYSTEM OF KNOWLEDGE. Hence it is called light. There are three states with regard to gospel knowledge. 1. The heathen are children of night. 2. The Jews had some light. 3. Christians are children of the light and of the day. Christians ought to excel in this light. II. A CONVERSATION BECOMING THE GOSPEL SHOULD BE CHEERFUL, FOR THE GOSPEL IS A SYSTEM OF JOY. 1. As such it was predicted. 2. Joyful results universally followed its establishment. 3. It has lost none of its power to bless. (1) In duty. (2) In trials. (3) Death. III. A CONVERSATION BECOMING THE GOSPEL MUST BE HOLY, FOR THE GOSPEL IS A SYSTEM OF SANCTITY. 1. There is no holiness in theory or practice outside. But—2. The gospel (1) teaches it; (2) requires it; (3) produces it. IV. A CONVERSATION WORTHY THE GOSPEL SHOULD BE CHARITABLE, FOR THE GOSPEL IS A SYSTEM OF BENEVOLENCE. Nothing is more unbecoming to it than a selfish, grasping temper. (*W. Jay.*) *Christian consistency*.—I. PAUL PLEADED FOR A CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH. The Christian's life is to harmonize with his creed. His life must be characterized by—1. Truthfulness. God is the author of truth; the Holy Spirit the spirit of truth; the gospel the word of truth; and the Christian must be a man of truth. 2. Love. This is the first and great commandment in the evidence of discipleship, the inspiration of duty, and is due to foes as well as friends. 3. Holiness in thought, desire, and action. II. FOR A UNITED CHURCH. The early Christians were frequently exhorted to be one in faith, feeling, spirit, and action; the bond was to be love, and the end the establishment of the gospel. This union was necessary—1. To resist their common adversaries, who were and are combined, persistent, powerful. 2. To develop their Christian graces. Our minds and hearts are enlarged by the intercourse of good men. The bold encourage the timid, the wise instruct the ignorant, the strong shelter the weak. The manifold diversities of our nature and condition constitute the perfection of the Church, as the members of the body. 3. To establish the true faith. The success of the whole depends on the agreement of the parts. III. FOR A ZEALOUS CHURCH. Christians are to stand by, struggle for, suffer, and even die with one another. 1. This zeal is demanded for a noble object. (1) We are to strive, not for place, power, or popularity, but—(2) For the faith; to maintain its purity in our own hearts, and to diffuse its gracious influence through the world. (3) The tradesman is zealous in business, the statesman in politics, the Christian for the faith. (4) This was never needed more than now. 2. The object inspires the zeal. It calls into exercise our highest faculties; it informs the judgment, subdues the will, sanctifies the affections, and ennobles the soul. It has done more for the race than all the moralists or philanthropists who have ever lived. 3. This zeal is to be exercised in a commendable spirit, "together." Christians are not to strive against one another. The earnest Christian has no time for useless debate. Cultivate the spirit of brotherly sympathy. (*G. J. Procter.*) *Christian consistency*.—I. WHAT IS THAT DEPORTMENT WHICH BECOMETH A PROFESSOR OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST? 1. With respect to the world. (1) He must not worship its god—mammon (*Matt. vi. 24*; *1 John ii. 15*; *1 Tim. vi. 9-11*). (2) He must shun its company (*Psa. i. 1*; *2 Cor. vi. 14-18*). (3) He must avoid its pleasures and fashions (*Rom. xii. 2*). True, Christ attended the wedding at Cana, &c., but good people were there, and it was to manifest His glory; but whoever heard of God's glory being promoted at card parties, &c. 2. With respect to his prevailing sentiments. (1) Peace. (2) Faith. (3) Joyful hope. (4) Patience and cheerful acquiescence. (5) Courage. 3. With respect to sin. (1) He must not commit it. (2) He must hate it. (3) He must struggle against it in every form and everywhere. 4. With respect to the aim and business of his life. To promote the glory of God (*Matt. v. 14-16*; *1 Cor. x. 31-32*). II. WHY SUCH A DEPORTMENT SHOULD BE MAINTAINED. 1. Because it would bring joy to those who watch for your souls (*chap. ii. 1, iv. 1*). 2. Because of the advantage—"the witness in yourself" of your conversion. 3. Because it prepares the mind for the season of affliction and the solemnities of death. 4. Because it is the will and commandment of Christ. Conclusion: 1. The world vigilantly watches and judges the character and conduct of professors. The want of consistency in Christians has done more harm to Christianity than all the ravings of infidels. 2. God's eye is constantly upon us. 3. The plea of not being a professor will be no plea in the hour of death for a sinful life. (*I. Spencer, D.D.*) *Christian consistency*.—I. THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF Christian consistency. II. ITS SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS. III. PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE. IV. GRATIFYING RESULTS. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) 1. WHAT THE CONDUCT IS WHICH BECOMES

THE GOSPEL. 1. It must be the genuine result of gospel dispositions. Conduct is the birth of principle; what is seen in the life is the development of what exists in the heart. The tree must be good before the fruit can be good. But we must not judge altogether by outward appearance. All is not gold that glitters. A fair show in the flesh is naught unless the heart be right with God. The gospel makes the heart right. 2. Must be maintained under the influence of gospel principles and in the use of gospel ordinances. Everything is liable to deterioration; institutions, buildings, metals of the finest polish, Christians of the most exalted piety. We must live by faith, by the love of God in the keeping of His commandments, by an attention to the means of grace. 3. Must resemble gospel patterns. The gospel is not a collection of maxims and doctrines so much as an exhibition of examples. "Follow me as I follow Christ." 4. Must be conformable to gospel precepts. The gospel is not merely an offer of mercy and a promise of blessing. The law is not made void through faith. Where much is given, much is required. The epitome of these precepts is "live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world." II. **WHAT OBLIGATIONS ARE WE UNDER TO MAINTAIN THIS CONDUCT?**

1. God requires it. For this end He has given His revelation. "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord," &c. The will of God is righteous, and no creature can resist it with impunity. 2. Consistency requires it. Profession without practice is hypocrisy. Actions speak louder than words. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 3. Our personal comfort requires it. "Our rejoicing is the testimony of our conscience." Without this peace is a delusion. 4. Our connection with society requires it. We owe to society what we cannot adequately repay but by the blessings of the life of the gospel. 5. Our final salvation requires it. We shall be judged according to our works. Conclusion: 1. How excellent is the Christian religion. 2. How illiberal and unreasonable to censure it on account of its inconsistent professors. (*R. Treffry.*) *The gospel's power in a Christian's life:*—I. **WHAT THE GOSPEL IS.** 1. It is the gospel of Christ because

—(1) He is the author of it. (2) The pith and marrow of it. (3) The finisher of it. It is His property, it glorifies His person, it is sweet with the savour of His name. 2. It is the gospel of Christ. Good news. (1) It removes the worst ills—sin, death, hell. (2) It brings the best blessings—reconciliation with God, goodwill on earth, eternal happiness in heaven. II. **OUR CONVERSATION MUST BE SUCH AS BECOMETH THE GOSPEL.** The gospel is—1. Simple. So should we be in our dress, our speech, our behaviour. Wherever you find the Christian you ought not to want a key to him. He should be a transparent man like Nathaniel and "as little children." 2. True. Gold without dross. So should the Christian be in his talk. There should be no scandal, oath-taking, equivocation, still less lying. 3. Fearless. It calls things by their right names, and is the very reverse of what is now called charity. Be honest and brave in your profession and action. 4. Gentle. Bad temper is quite contrary to the gospel. Have a lion's heart, but a lady's hand. 5. Loving. Without love the Christian is as sounding brass. 6. Merciful. Harsh or miserly people do not become the gospel. 7. Holy. The Christian must be holy as Christ is holy. III. **THE STERN NECESSITY OF A CONVERSATION THAT BECOMETH THE GOSPEL.** 1. If you do not live like this you will make your innocent fellow-members suffer. You tempt others, and bring discredit on the whole Church. 2. You make your Lord suffer. The world lays your sin at the door of your religion. 3. You will pull down all the witness you have ever borne for Christ. How can your children, neighbours, &c., believe you if you act inconsistently. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Christian conduct is made up of little things:—See to it that each hour's feelings, and thoughts, and actions are pure and true; then will your life be such. The mightiest maze of magnificent harmonies that ever a Beethoven gave to the world, is but single notes, and all its complicated and interlacing strains are resolvable into individualities. The wide pasture is but separate spears of grass; the sheeted bloom of the prairies but isolated flowers. Striving together for the faith of the gospel.—1. The phrase, "faith of the gospel," has a distinct significance in the New Testament. It refers to the Divine revelation of mercy and love in the Son of God, and its acceptance by earnest and penitent trust. It is connected with long lives of antecedent prophecy, symbolical services, the constant yearning of the world for a Redeemer, and the Messianic hope of the Jews. 2. This message of redemption meets with endless forms of acceptance and rejection. (1) At first its promulgation came in contact with heathenism as a religion, and naturally accused the opposition of the proud systems of error. (2) Next it came in contact with

Heathenism as a philosophy, and the proud reason of the classic world sought to

analyze its mysteries. (3) To every form of religious thought and every phase of intellectual life it has come for eighteen centuries to be rejected by the proud, but to be accepted by the meek. 3. It is one of the vital questions of the day how to meet and overcome this opposition. I. THE PULPIT is naturally called into requisition. 1. But is it to be the teacher of philosophy? Then its function is to wrestle with the doubts, to antagonize the unbelief of the day. But this attitude is only a negative one, and to take up in detail the varied assaults would only be to advertize and disseminate them. 2. The real business of the pulpit, as defined by Scripture, is to preach Christ and Him crucified, and by the proclamation of positive truth there the unbelief of the day will best be met. II. THE PRESS competes with the pulpit in the education of the multitude. Here unbelief finds full and systematized expression, but so may and so does Christianity. The bane and the antidote exist side by side, and sceptical assaults along the whole line of the faith have been repelled in current literature. Here scientific objections can be and are met by scientific men. III. But the INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN LIFE is the best defender of the faith. The union of Christians in the conversation which becometh the gospel will render the faith invincible. (*W. A. Snively, D.D.*) *Means in aid of the propagation of the gospel*:—I. THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL. "The faith which was once delivered to the saints," "the truth as it is in Jesus": viz.—1. The truth about God. His unity and threefold Personality. 2. About man—his fall and ruin. 3. About redemption—the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ; the acceptance of salvation by faith; regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Ghost. 4. About immortality. II. THE IMPORT OF THE APOSTLE'S LANGUAGE CONCERNING IT. The Philippians are to strive together for it. The gospel was a precious deposit; they were to hold it fast in opposition to all who would rob them of it; they were to preserve it in its original purity, in opposition to those who sought to adulterate it. But it was not to be a concealed treasure, or appropriated exclusively by themselves, but was to be communicated to their fellow men. 1. All Christians may and must aid in disseminating the faith of the gospel. Some think this the business of ministers. Paul told the "saints" as well as the bishops and deacons to do it. Christians may do this. (1) By cultivating purity of heart and life and maintaining an exemplary deportment. This method is sanctioned by Christ Himself—"Let your light so shine." Its efficacy may be illustrated by numerous facts. This was the main method of gospel propagation in Apostolic and early Christian times. Gibbon puts the virtues of Christians among his "secondary causes." So to-day. The greatest enemies of the Cross are inconsistent Christians. (2) By pecuniary contributions. Many overvalue money; some undervalue it: the truth is, it is a talent to be employed for God. God has given you the power and opportunity to get it. Consecrate it therefore to Him. The proportion must be left to conscience. The poorest should not be discouraged, for God values the widow's mite, when the offering of a willing mind. Let modern Churches take example by the Church at Philippi. (3) By union and co-operation. The advantages of this are obvious. We see this in business and politics, and in philanthropic and religious societies. Why then should minor differences separate Christians? Divisions are a source of weakness; union is strength. (4) By humble, importunate, and believing prayer. Old Testament and New alike enjoin this as a means of advancing the faith. Let this be remembered in public, private, and family prayer. It is a means which God delights to honour. 2. In this good work Christians should be zealous. "Striving" as the competitors in the games. Nothing is more offensive to Christ than lukewarmness. (1) The work needs the most strenuous effort. It has to struggle with the most inveterate and formidable opposition, from the evil heart and from evil systems. (2) It is worthy of them. It brings glory to God, the highest good to man, and honour to the Redeemer. (*J. Thomson, D.D.*) *Unity and action*:—I. THE OBJECT FOR WHOSE PERPETUITY YOU ARE TO CO-OPERATE. The whole gospel, not its promises, or precepts, or doctrines alone, still less any particular views relating to them, such as Calvinism or Arminianism. We have to contend for the faith, not a fragment of it. Why are Christians to strive together for this? 1. Because they alone understand and prize it. By the grace of the Spirit they see its value. To them Christ is all. His gospel is the book of their hearts. They cannot but love what is precious. To others it may be dull. 2. Because to them its honourable privileges are granted. Their religious privileges become duties in consequence of their obligations to Him who had saved them. Their duties become privileges in consequence of their love to Him who first loved them. 3. Because the enemies of the Master are watchful

and active. II. THE POSITION YOU ARE TO MAINTAIN. It was not required of them to assume the position of an united phalanx. God had assigned that as He has to us. We are simply to "stand fast in one spirit" in it. You have the gospel verities—unitedly maintain them. Divide and conquer is the policy of the adversary; close your ranks and win is ours. "Every kingdom divided against itself shall not stand." III. THE UNITY OF PURPOSE YOU ARE TO CHERISH. 1. Be of one mind on the subject of unity itself. 2. On the subject of social prayer: "If two of you shall agree, &c." 3. With respect to the mutual ministry: Support your pastors and love them. 4. In doing good to all men. (*W. Leask, D.D.*) *Stand fast*:—The word *στήκετε* in the original signifies to hold on, and to remain firm at one's post, and is derived from the combats, in which each endeavour to keep his place, and to maintain himself in his seat, without going back, or being shaken by all the attacks of the enemy. The apostle, employing this image to represent to us the life of the faithful, means, that in this spiritual warfare we should never allow ourselves to be drawn from that position in which God has placed us, and that all together, like his faithful and valiant soldiers, courageously repulsing the enemy, we should always stand firm, without quitting either the faith or the profession which by His grace we have made. (*J. Daillé.*) *Striving together*:—As a wrestler grapples his antagonist, and strains himself for the mastery, so the Christian must struggle against every enemy of the truth. (*G. J. Procter.*) *Concord in the Church*:—As there is no body or society more noble than the Church, so there is none in which union and concord are more necessary. You are begotten of the same seed, *i.e.*, of the gospel, brought up in the same family, nourished with the same food, animated by the same spirit, destined to the same inheritance. If so many close ties cannot unite you, at any rate let this common warfare in which you are engaged, this common danger that you run, and these common enemies with whom you contend, extinguish your differences, and make you rally together for your common preservation and defence. Often among the kingdoms of the earth, the fear of an enemy without stays the misunderstandings and quarrels within. Let us imitate in this respect the prudence of the children of this world. Whatever you may have of wisdom or courage, turn it against the enemy. May he alone feel the vigour of your arm, and the point of your weapons. It is not against your brother that they should be employed. They are made, and they have been given you, to defend, and not to wound him; to preserve, and not to shed his blood. I say it with regret, it is nothing but our division, my brethren, which has prevented the defeat of the enemy, and the triumph of the Church. If we had all fought together, we should long ago have been conquerors. (*J. Daillé.*)

Ver. 28. In nothing terrified by your adversaries.—*Courage*:—I. THE NEED of it. II. THE PROOFS of it. III. THE ADVANTAGE of it; it is a sign of perdition to your foes—of salvation to you. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) I. YOUR ADVERSARIES are numerous, mighty, terrible, yet they will certainly perish. II. YOUR SALVATION is near, sure, glorious, and that of God. (*Ibid.*) *An evident token of perdition*. *Tokens of perdition*:—Perdition means hopeless ruin. A token is a premonition. The natural world is full of warnings. A change in the atmosphere or in the order of things, a coming disaster or great event, is heralded by certain phenomena, which long experience and observation know how to interpret. So also in the political, social, moral, and religious spheres. So evident are these tokens to the discerning that it is not difficult to forecast the future. On this principle Paul interprets the conduct of adversaries. And every preacher of the gospel is warranted in accepting certain traits of character and developments of depravity as "evident tokens of perdition" in those in whom they are found, and hold them forth as warnings, "beacon-lights" in the world. Let me specify a few such tokens, not from the infidel, or openly immoral classes, but from the respectable and Church-going class of sinners. I. A STATE OF HABITUAL MORAL INSENSIBILITY on the momentous and infinitely interesting matter of salvation. II. A QUIET, SLEEPING CONSCIENCE, under the sunlight of the Bible, and the faithful and searching appeals of God's ambassadors. III. CONVICTIONS OF SIN LOST, and RELAPSE into greater carelessness and insensibility than ever before, after a period of religious interest. IV. PASSED BY AND LEFT UNDISTURBED in their sins—left, it may be, to scoff and oppose—when God's Holy Spirit has been sent down in mighty power to awaken and convert souls and gather in the harvest. V. WHERE PROVIDENTIAL CHASTISEMENTS FAIL OF THEIR END, and, instead of humble, penitent submission and tearful recognition of God's hand in them, there is a proud,

unyielding spirit of bitterness. Now where such things appear, "perdition" is nigh; the final wrath is imminent; the last sands of hope are falling; the knell of despair is ready to sound! (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Tokens of perdition:—* I. A FALSE HOPE OF PIETY. There are many who deceive themselves with a spurious religion, and while they have a name to live, are dead. II. PREMATURE DEPRAVITY. Though the principle of sin is inherent in every human bosom, it attains a more early and rank luxuriance in some cases than in others. III. INVETERACY IN TRANSGRESSION. The almost invincible force of habit is a subject of universal remark. IV. CONFIRMED BELIEF OF DESTRUCTIVE ERROR. The confidence which the votaries of error repose in its delusions is widely different in different persons. With some it is little more than a cherished wish that their system were true. V. UNSANCTIFIED WORLDLY PROSPERITY. VI. APATHY OF MIND UNDER DIVINE CHASTISEMENT. VII. RETURN TO INSENSIBILITY after serious impressions. VIII. AN IMPENITENT OLD AGE. (*Christian Age.*) *Men not terrified:—* John Noyes, kissing the stake, said, "Blessed be the time that ever I was born for this day." To his fellow-martyrs he said, "We shall not lose our lives in this fire, but change them for a better, and for coals have pearls." Hugh Laverocke, comforting John-a-Price, his fellow-martyr, said unto him, "Be of good comfort, my brother, for my Lord of London is our good physician. He will cure thee of all thy blindness, and me of my lameness this day." Joyce Lewis.—"When I behold the ugly face of death, I am afraid; but when I consider Christ's amiable countenance, I take heart again." John Huss said to a countryman who threw a faggot at his head, "Oh, holy simplicity, God send thee better light! You roast the goose now, but a swan shall come after me, and he shall escape your fire." Huss, a goose in the Bohemian language; and Luther, a swan. Castilia Rupea.—"Though you throw my body down off this steep hill, yet will my soul mount upwards again. Your blasphemies more offend my mind than your torments do my body." Doctor Taylor, as he was going to martyrdom: "I shall this day deceive the worms in Hadley churchyard," and fetching a leap or two when he came within two miles of Hadley, "Now," saith he, "lack I but two stiles, and I am even at my Father's house." *In nothing affrighted:—*The rendering of the Revised Version is very happily chosen. The word is used of horses shying in view of any unusual or unexpected object. Believers are apt to be so scared; but then it is implied in the word used that a sudden fright or panic may after all arise from trilling cause. It is that which need not disturb. Whatever it is that causes the alarm it is seen to be powerless, even to vanish whenever it is boldly approached. All such trials to God's people are like the lions in the narrow path leading to the Palace Beautiful of Bunyan's allegory. They were chained as the Pilgrim espied them, but he knew it not. They have therefore only to be courageously approached, and then the voice of Watchful is heard, "Fear not the lions, for they are chained, and are placed there for trial of faith where it is, and for discovery of those that have none. Keep in the midst of the path, and no hurt shall come unto thee." (*J. Hutchison, D.D.*)

Vers. 29-30. *Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ.—Fellowship with the martyrs and confessors:—* I. LIKE FAITH. II. LIKE CONFLICTS. III. LIKE HONOUR. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Christian's life is:—* I. A LIFE OF FAITH. This faith is—1. The gift of God—"is given you." 2. A particular gift bestowed on a particular people, distinguishing them from all others. The Christian knows and enjoys what no one else does. II. A LIFE OF SUFFERING. 1. Christ's life was full of it, and so, therefore, is the believer's. 2. Some sufferings he shares with the humanity to which he belongs. 3. Some trials are peculiar to the Christian arising from (1) sin; (2) the inherent difficulty of the Christian life; (3) profession before the world; (4) self-denial; (5) consistency in business, &c.; (6) the opposition of the enemies of the gospel. III. THE LIFE OF SUFFERING PROVES THE LIFE OF FAITH. Others are rebellious, or stoically resigned; the Christian bows out of love to Christ, and is supported by Christ in response to faith. (*J. W. Reeve, M.A.*) *The gifts of God:—* 1. WHAT THEY ARE. The power to believe—to suffer. II. THEIR INESTIMABLE VALUE. 1. Faith brings peace, joy, righteousness. 2. Patient suffering brings deliverance, conquest, glory. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Unto you it is given to believe:—* I. FAITH IS THE GIFT OF GOD. He supplies the ground, the means, the power. II. IT IS GIVEN TO YOU. You can accept the ground, use the means, exercise the power. III. HOW FAR HAVE YOU IMPROVED IT? You cannot reach the higher standpoint before the lower; every one has a measure of ability; therefore repent, believe. (*Ibid.*) *Unto you it is given to suffer:—*

God gives you—I. The OPPORTUNITY. II. The POWER. III. The HONOUR. IV. The REWARD of suffering for Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Suffering for Christ*.—It is said that men learned to despise pain before Christ. This is true. But where, save in Christian literature and history, do you find suffering converted into joy, esteemed as an honour, and borne as a badge of royalty. As a king grants charters and honours, so Christ as our Sovereign gives His disciples the privilege of faith and alliance to Him. And he still further honours them by permitting them to suffer on His behalf. Let us see what kind of sufferings are included in this charter.

I. ALL INFLICTED DIRECTLY FOR OUR ADHESION TO THE NAME AND WORSHIP OF CHRIST. Physical persecution, social, domestic. II. ALL ARISING FROM THE EFFECTUAL PREACHING OF TRUTH, whether by ministers or private disciples. We are not to count the suffering which comes from our own headstrong rashness in speech or administration, but that which comes from a calm inflexible advocacy of the truth as it is in Jesus. For this it is an honour to suffer. III. ALL WHICH ARISES FROM THE APPLICATION OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH to human disposition and conduct, to the manners of society, to the selfishness and injustice of men. Labourers in this harvest field will have their bosom full of sheaves, and their head crowned with thorns. Let a man have a conscience, and he will perforce find himself a warrior. What affinity is there between generosity and greed. IV. ALL SUFFERING NOT OF THE NATURE OF OBLOQUY. All self-denials, watchings, labours, cares, weariness, incident to a life devoted to the cause of God. Those whose parish is the dungeon, the hospital, the purlieu of vice. V. ALL CONSEQUENT UPON A STRIFE WITH SELF AND CIRCUMSTANCES for the purpose of augmenting Christian dispositions. Our internal conflicts are often greater than our external. What suffering is involved in our strife with the world, the flesh, and the devil; in our endeavour to be patient under sickness and misfortune, resigned in the midst of sorrows and bereavement. VI. ALL ARISING FROM THE SERVICE WE PERFORM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS. Mothers with their children in bearing and up-bringing, friends, philanthropists. Conclusion: I remark in view of this exposition—1 We are not to seek suffering on purpose. Suffering without moral impulse is of no account. 2. It is a shame for a man to entertain an ideal of Christian life which is ease and freedom from inconvenience. 3. All true education consists in preparation for and endurance of suffering. Let parents see to this. 4. We may form a proper judgment of those who are called to labour for God. Those prepared to regard suffering as an honour, and to count the victory as worth any price. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The value of suffering*.—To this refiner's fire may doubtless be ascribed in part the lustre and purity of their faith as compared with other Churches. (*Bishop Lightfoot.*) Persecutions only raked away the ashes, so that the spiritual flame was steady and brilliant. (*Prof. Eadie.*) *The grace and honour of suffering*.—The men whom a general, at the critical moment of a great battle, specially appoints to hold the key of his position, or whom, in the assault of a besieged city, he sends on a "forlorn hope," are, by his choice of them for peril and probable suffering, marked out as in his judgment "the bravest of the brave." Their comrades, even while rejoicing in their hearts, it may be, that the selection has left themselves out, feel that those on whom the choice has fallen are honoured. Similarly, is there not "grace" shown in the choice made by the "Captain of salvation," when in His providence He calls this soldier of the cross, and that, to suffer or die under the standard? In the old persecuting times in our country, men who "bore in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus," in limbs crushed by the iron boot or torn by the rack—looking back in after days upon the patience which the Saviour had given them amid their anguish, and the increase of spiritual wisdom and energy which had come through the trial to themselves, and to some extent also to others, could not but esteem the suffering for Christ as a "gift of grace." When under sentence of death, good Bishop Ridley wrote thus to his relatives: "I warn you all, my beloved kinsfolk, that ye be not amazed or astonished at the kind of my departure or dissolution; for I assure you I think it the most honour that ever I was called unto in all my life. And therefore I thank God heartily for it, that it hath pleased Him to call me, of His great mercy, unto this high honour, to suffer death willingly for His sake and in His cause; unto the which honour He called the holy prophets, and His dearly beloved apostles, and His blessed chosen martyrs." And when the end came, and Latimer and he were burned at the same stake—whilst the persecutors could see only the flame which consumed the flesh, the faith of the martyrs could discern for themselves a chariot of fire waiting to bear them home to their Lord, and for their country a fire of pious zeal lighted up,

which all the arts of the wicked one should never be able to put out. There was great "grace" there. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) *The service of suffering*:—Dr. Tronchin, talking one day with the son of Cæsar Malan about his father, who was lying on his deathbed, said, "How often have I not heard even his friends say, when I spoke with admiration of the work of your father, 'Malan serves God with fire, courage, and perseverance, because the service which God requires of him is an active service, and consists in an activity which responds to his tastes and talents.' But wait before judging him definitely until God calls him to a passive service of suffering." God is doing this under our eyes at this hour, and under our eyes also His servant is found faithful. (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *The honour of suffering for Christ*:—One of the witnesses for the truth when imprisoned for conscience' sake in the days of Queen Mary, is said to have thus written to a friend: "A prisoner for Christ! What is this for a poor worm! Such honour have not all the saints. Both the degrees which I took at the University have not set me so high as the honour of becoming a prisoner of the Lord." *The mystery of suffering*:—"Unaccountable this!" said the Wax, as from the flame it dropped melting upon the Paper beneath. "Do not grieve," said the Paper; "I am sure it is all right." "I was never in such agony!" exclaimed the Wax, still dropping. "It is not without a good design, and will end well," replied the Paper. The Wax was unable to reply at once, owing to a strong pressure; and when it again looked up it bore a beautiful impression, the counterpart of the seal which had been applied to it. "Ah! I comprehend now," said the Wax, no longer in suffering. "I was softened in order to receive this lovely durable impress. Yes; I see now it was all right, because it has given to me the beautiful likeness which I could not otherwise have obtained." (*Mrs. Prosser.*)

CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1-13. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ.—Christian unity:—**I. THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN UNITY.** 1. This unity is inward and consists of harmonious spiritual feeling. (1) It can only subsist among Christians. (2) At the same time it is possible and also common for those who in the main are brethren to fail grievously. (3) This unity is specifically—(a) Agreement of view. (b) Accord in purpose. (c) Mutual love. 2. It is also outward and visible. (1) Wherever there is true inward feeling there is a corresponding outward manifestation. (2) This unity when seen cannot but impress the world with a favourable conclusion. **II. THE CAUSES OF DIVISIONS.** The spirit of vain-glory, self-preference, self-interest. It was from envy the brethren of Joseph hated him. The same was at the root of Absalom's and Adonijah's rebellion. This was rebuked by Christ when He set a little child in the midst of His contentious disciples. We are not willing to admit this as the cause in our own case. We persuade ourselves that real grievances are the cause, and that conscience is prompting us to be valiant for the truth. But these considerations, when genuine, would indeed lead to plainness of speech, but would, in their end and aim, promote rather than retard brotherly love and union. Grievances are only occasions for forbearance. **III. THE REMEDY.** "The mind that was in Christ Jesus." His humble, self-emptying spirit. The spirit, then, of humiliation which will not stand upon claims and rights, but readily concede them, is that which will check disunion and promote unity. **Conclusion:** 1. Make this a means of trying your own spirits. 2. Do we wish to learn this necessary disposition? 3. Without this vain is our profession of vital Christianity. (*E. Meade, M.A.*) *The excellence of Christian unity*:—1. Does Christian unity consist in the union of Christians in one corporate, visible organization? It should do, and one day will do. 2. But even this desirable object by itself would not secure true unity. It would be but a body without life—the unity of the church-yard. 3. The only true unity is that of the text, one of soul and brotherly affection. **I. Look at its EXCELLENCE.** It gives peace; promotes strength and usefulness; commands attention and imitation. 1. Notice the individual man. The soul is a little kingdom. In it there dwell a variety of faculties; there are fears, hopes, likes, dislikes; appetites to urge and principles to check; self-will to prompt, self-interest to restrain; passions to hurry away, conscience to control, &c. When these are in

discord what a "troubled sea" there is. But when the Spirit of God is received and obeyed, what a blessed harmony is the result—"a peace that passeth understanding." 2. Take the family. Let love reign there, sustained and cherished by mutual forbearance in the fear of God, parents honoured, sons and daughters kind and helpful, and how the power and usefulness of the family are increased. It is not to have many hands at a rope which will pull the weight, but all moved by the same impulse and pulling together. 3. Suppose the same to prevail in a parish. Why should it not? It was so once at Jerusalem, and would now as then (Acts ii. 46-47) result in personal happiness and numerous conversions. 4. If the same obtained throughout the world the effect would be irresistible. II. THE EVILS OF DISUNION AND DIVISION. 1. It is a proof of being unspiritual and carnal, as it was in the case of the Corinthians, and in some cases of being unconverted. How dwelleth the love of God in the fomenters of strife and discord. 2. It is a hindrance to grace, comfort, and usefulness. 3. It is a stumbling-block to the world. (*Ibid.*) *Love promotes unity*.—He found an inexpressibly sweet love to those that he looked upon as belonging to Christ, beyond almost all that he ever felt before, so that (to use his own words) "it seemed like a piece of heaven to have one of them near him." (*Life of Brainerd.*) *How unity is obtained*.—When the tide is out *γὰρ* may have noticed, as you rambled among the rocks, little pools with little fishes in them. To the shrimp, in such a pool, his foot-depth of salt water is all the ocean for the time being. He has no dealings with his neighbour shrimp in the adjacent pool, though it may be only a few inches of sand that divide them; but when the rising ocean begins to lip over the margin of the lurking-place, one pool joins another, their various tenants meet, and by-and-by, in place of their little patch of standing water, they have the ocean's boundless fields to roam in. When the tide is out—when religion is low—the faithful are to be found insulated, here a few and there a few, in the little standing pools that stud the beach, having no dealings with their neighbours of the adjoining pools, calling them Samaritans, and fancying that their own little communion includes all that are precious in God's sight. They forget, for a time, that there is a vast and expansive ocean rising—every ripple brings it nearer—a mightier communion, even the communion of saints, which is to engulf all minor considerations, and to enable the fishes of all pools—the Christians—the Christians of all denominations—to come together. When, like a flood, the Spirit flows into the Churches, Church will join to Church, and saint will join to saint, and all will rejoice to find that if their little pools have perished, it is not by the scorching summer's drought, nor the casting in of earthly rubbish, but by the influx of that boundless sea whose glad waters touch eternity, and in whose ample depths the saints in heaven, as well as the saints on earth, have room enough to range. (*Dr. Hamilton.*) *The Christian doctrine of self*.—I. THE ADJURATION (ver. 1). 1. The strength of the appeal lies in the completeness of its expressions. (1) "If there be any consolation in Christ." I charge you by every holy argument which our common union with Christ suggests, not such as the dignity of your position, the grandeur of union, the weakness and odiousness of discord, &c. (2) Paul passes from the Christ as external from whom every argument flows, to the love which is internal. "Comfort of love." I charge you by our common possession of love, and by the tender motive contained in it. (3) Thus the exhortation to self-renouncing devotion is based upon union with Christ and enforced by the love of the heart. Christ gives the strength of the argument: love gives that argument its tenderness. 2. Here follows another pair of appeals, but now the Holy Spirit is the strength of the invocation. (1) "Fellowship of the Spirit." I appeal to the common inheritance of the Holy Ghost which makes Christians one. That fellowship is the ground of your self-renouncing devotion and the power which renders you capable of it. (2) "Bowels and mercies." The gentle, compassionate, forgiving spirit is most mighty in annihilating causes of dissention and is the source of all compassion in us to mankind. Renounce, therefore, every selfish impediment and devote yourself to the common cause afresh. 3. Thus the apostle's joy would be fulfilled. He was already happy in their devotion and in the fruits of their fellowship. But he had heard of the risings of a fatal spirit among them. His joy could not reach its consummation without their united and persevering devotion. II. THE EXHORTATION. 1. In its unity. Here we have self-love in the great uniting object of Christ's kingdom, subordinate in humility to the honour of others, and losing its essential selfishness in the perpetual combination of the advantage of others with its own. These three are one. Self-renunciation is the secret of unity in the Church, of humility in the individual, and of charity in

all the relations of life. 2. In its divisions. (1) The oneness of a common interest is enforced. "Likeminded," regarding together one object of pursuit, viz., all the compass of that truth which commands the Church's faith, all the variety of those interests that concentrate the Church's desire and effort; all that constitutes the great business of Christ's servants in the world. This unity of purpose is either the result of a common love set upon the same object—"having the same love," or is shown by the concentration of the faculties of the soul on that object—"of one accord in the promotion of one thing." (2) The humble preference of others to self in all that pertains to dignity (ver. 3). (a) Negatively. They are to avoid the conduct he condemns at Rome—strife was to be kept out of their community and vanity out of their character. A mind clothed with humility cannot desire pre-eminence, and cannot, therefore, contend against others to bring them down, or seek vain self-elevation for its own sake. (b) Positively. In the exercise of humility they were to regard not that every one's moral character was better than their own, but that others were more worthy of distinction in the Church. "In honour preferring one another." (3) The habitual consideration of others' well-being in connection with our own (ver. 4). "Own things" must be taken in the largest sense, temporally and spiritually. Nothing is our own absolutely and apart from others. Our things are ours only in union with the things of others. We are not forbidden to seek our own interests, but only in common with the good of all around us. "None of us liveth to himself." (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *Christian concord*:—1. The "therefore" connects the passage with the "conversation worthy of the gospel." 2. The central precept is in verse 2—"That ye be likeminded," which suggests the subject of the whole. I. THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENT OF CHRISTIAN CONCORD. 1. Mutual and all-pervading love—"Having the same love." All true Christians have this in some measure. Among the members of a congregation it should be peculiarly strong. To its prevalence will correspond congregational life and health. Frequent and close intercourse in a large city church is impossible—all the more necessary, therefore, to combine in the various schemes of Christian effort. One of the most valuable results of Sabbath Schools, Dorcas Societies, &c., is the formation of Christian friendship. 2. Union or accord of souls minding the same thing—the basis of Christian concord—oneness of view in respect to all matters of vital moment. Having this oneness of view Christians will also in the degree in which they yield up their hearts to the common faith have a substantial oneness of disposition and resolution. The "one thing" is—(1) The advancement of the kingdom of God in ourselves through advance in the beauty and strength of godliness. (2) In the Church, through the increase of wisdom, purity, and zeal. (3) In the world, through the universal and successful proclamation of the gospel. 3. Mutual helpfulness. Christian love cannot flourish apart from Christian energy. A monastery is a hot-bed of jealousy and discord, and the more closely a denomination or Church approaches this character in inactivity and uselessness, the more open it will be to dissensions. II. ITS MOTIVE. 1. The fulfilment of the apostle's joy. Each reference to their possible religious experience is like a rod of Divine power calling out a stream of sympathy and affection. 2. If Paul's joy was augmented by the union of the Philippians, much more will Christ's joy be fulfilled by the answer to His prayer "that they all may be one." It is only the dissensions of the Church that postpones this blessed consummation. III. THE SOURCES OF DISCORD AND THE MEANS OF DRYING THEM UP. 1. The great causes of dissension in any society are here indicated. 2. These evils are only to be removed by the cultivation of the opposite virtues of humility, which is an exclusively Christian grace. 3. This is not meanness of spirit. While it recognizes facts as they are in human nature, it involves a profound respect for man's possible self. 4. This lowliness of mind leads each to esteem others better than self (Rom. xii. 10; Eph. v. 21; 1 Pet. v. 5). This does not imply blindness to one's own ability and attainments, or to the deficiencies of others; but a humble view of self will inspire to help others to fill their place of usefulness—"to please them for their good to edification." 5. It will also lead every man to look not on his own things, and to cherish a spirit of unselfishness in regard to others. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) *Christian unity*:—I. ITS SPIRIT—Christian, kind, brotherly, compassionate. II. ITS PRACTICE—Peaceable, humble, unselfish. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Paul's appeal*:—1. The "if" is not here the sign of doubt or hesitation, but rather of assured certainty. When persons wish to disclose the vastness of an assembly, they sometimes say, "If there was one present, there were two thousand." As employed by Paul it is equivalent to "If there is any water in the sea, or any light in the sun."

2. Consolation, comfort of love, &c., signify much in common. This appeal is a burst of tenderness. Affection delights in repetition. Love amplifies its expressions to the utmost; it is the effort of an eloquent rhetorician, artless, yet full of art. There are expressions full of summer light and beauty which are only revealed to the heart. 3. Paul having laid his basis in the very heart of Christ, makes an appeal—"fulfil ye my joy." It is right to interject one's personality as an element in an argument for brotherhood and consolidation in the Church. It appears an infinite descent from Christ to Paul, but, in reality, it is no descent; in this argument Christ's purpose and Paul's desire are identical. The soul has moods which bring it close to the heart of God. Paul appears before the Philippians more as saint than logician, and in that capacity Christ and the "servant" are one. The apostle likens his joy to a cup that is nearly full, and intimates that unanimity in the Church would fill it perfectly—make it overflow. See the importance even of a single element. An atom may be necessary to perfection. Beauty may depend on the straightness or curve of a single line. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The apostle's appeal:*—

I. THE MANNER OF THE APOSTLE'S EXHORTATION. He exhorteth them to be like-minded, having their affections (Rom. xii. 16), likings, and desires so set on the same things as to fulfil his joy. "I joy in your fellowship in the gospel," &c. (chap. i. 5-7), yet my joy is not full so long as I hear of your contentions. 1. "If there be any consolation in Christ." (1) In general the apostle's vehement obtestation for the embracing of concord, love, and humility, is to be noted. Pastors ought to labour to repress such enormities among their people as hinder the course of Christian conversation by beseeching as though they desired no other recompense than that such disorders might be reformed. They are fathers to their flocks (1 Cor. iv. 15; 1 John ii. 1). Sometimes, however, sternness must be used. Paul did not deal with the Galatians as with the Philippians, nor with some of the Corinthians (1 Cor. iv. 21). (2) In particular, the ground of his argument is, that if they had received comfort in Christ by him, then they ought at his request thus to comfort him, as to be likeminded, &c. 2. "If there be any comfort of love." The ground of which argument is that if they loved him as he loved them, and desired his comfort as he did theirs, then they would fulfil his joy. To yield to the holy desires of one another is an effectual token of Christian love towards one another (John xiv. 15; Philemon 17). Men are ready enough to yield to wicked enticings (Prov. i. 10-12). 3. "If there be any fellowship of the Spirit," i.e., "if ye be knit together in the bond of one Spirit, and have fellowship as members of one body, under one head, fulfil ye my joy." The ground of this argument is, that men knit together are to give proof thereof by concord. What proof of this many give, let their contentions and divisions witness. 4. "If any compassion and mercy." The ground of which argument is that in mercy and compassion to him, the Lord's prisoner for their sake, they should fulfil his joy in being likeminded. The godly requests of God's saints afflicted for Christ's sake should move in us such compassion as that we should gladly hearken and yield to them. II. THE MATTER. Observe—1. The godly pastor's joy is to be in his people, whatever his own case may be. 2. That that joy is not full as long as there is anything amiss amongst his people. 3. That he should be admonished to labour that nothing be amiss either touching doctrine or practice, so that his joy may be full. That there was something amiss here is proved by the exhortation; whence learn—(1) That, what the state of the best churches, so of the most holy men is. (2) To long to be of that triumphant Church, and to enter the holiest. Here Abraham, David, Job, Paul, Peter, have their faults. There they are perfected. 1. He exhorteth them to be "likeminded" (Rom. xii. 16), having their affections, likings, desires, set on the same things (1 Cor. i. 10; Rom. xv. 5). Are not Jews, Turks, Pharisees, &c., likeminded? The necessity of this is seen—(1) From the fact that we have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," &c. (Eph. iv. 5). (2) Because there is no better remedy against dissensions (John xvii. 21; Phil. iii. 16). Let us, therefore, beware how we dissent about matters of less moment when we are agreed in greater. 2. "Having the same love." This is how we may be likeminded. Love—(1) In respect of the object. Love the same Church, gospel, truth. Where one loves one thing, and another another, distractions and desolations ensue. (2) In respect of fervour. 3. "One accord"—agreeing in our wills that unity and concord may be maintained" (Psa. vii. 18; cxxxiii. 1; Acts iv. 32). 4. "One mind," or judgment. (*H. Airey, D.D.*) *Mutual harmony:*—We hear a great deal about the harmony of the spheres. That is poetry, but let us try and translate that poetry into practice. It is a painful thing to take up a newspaper now-a-days!

Every one seems to be fighting, abroad and at home. There is too much bitter controversy. We want to realize that if there is a mutual work to be done and faith to do it, there must be mutual love to supply the fire. I. The first way I want to approach this text is—along the line of *VARIETY*. “Being of one accord” does not always mean being of the same opinion. Of course, in the main there can be no good work done unless the great verities are believed in by us all. You have to live in harmony; your very nature is to be harmonious within you. You may be a very inharmonious man in yourself. You may be affectionate. Yes! but there is no courage in you. We have all got to contribute something to the harmony. I do not want, in a choir of musicians, all to play the violin; I should not like to listen to a band of flutes. To be all of one accord does not mean all doing the same thing or playing the same instrument. One man has his special gift. But in all this variety there is harmony; and is not that one of the most beautiful things in the world. The worst of it is that one bad musician can spoil a choir. One cantankerous person in the household can upset everything. One may injure many! Now variety is intended by God. There are men emphatically endowed by special gifts for mission work; some have tender sympathies and they can be friends to the fatherless and widow; some have gifts for calling out the energies of the young. But there must be harmony in all the variety—“being of one accord. II. There must be in this one accord *SUBORDINANCY* OF ONE TO THE OTHER. Everything must be subservient to great ends. There must always be the Chorus-Leader. What we want is the harmony of true, beautiful, religious charity. By subserviency I mean everything uniting for Christ’s ends. III. In this harmony there is *HEALTH*. If I have no pain in my hand or foot, but if I have a headache—what then? Where is the harmony within me? When the blood flows healthily, the eye is clear, the step elastic, the brain vigorous, the appetite sharp and good, and the sleep is restful—all is well! But if one of the members gets out of order, it is all misery. The head looks at the foot and says, “Why don’t you get better?” but by-and-by the head is all right, and the foot suffers too. The members are not of one accord. You may lift that thought up into the highest regions of all, and you may realize that if there is to be accord and harmony amongst men in the Church we must all take care of one another, it will not do to neglect anybody. You must look out and take care of the humblest member as well as the highest. It is so in a nation. A nation is in harmony when the rich sympathize with and help the poor, and the wise help the ignorant. A prosperous Church or nation is where there is health in the body politic. IV. *WE SHALL THUS ENJOY INFLUENCE*. The world likes harmony; it does not know how it is attuned; but it likes it. I have seen in a picture-gallery a poor fellow who comes in a sort of semi-fustian; he is no connoisseur, but there was harmony he could detect, and he liked it. V. It means *HEAVEN*! Rest in God. We have the mind of Christ. And that is heaven begun on earth. There is no harmony in a piano of itself. The mind makes the harmony. I cannot make harmony out of the piano; it is produced by the spirit that comes through the fingers. “Being of one accord.” Yes! one mind. We must be moulded after the mind of Christ. You may have a violin, flute, piano, and harp, but you must have one chord. “Being of one accord.” Oh, what a heaven it will be where we shall have our different mental calibre, for we shall not all be exactly alike. “One star differeth from another in glory,” and, in proportion as you realize that idea, you realize the harmony of heaven. (*W. M. Statham*.) *Christian union—strength*:—The King of the Lacedæmonians being once asked why it was that Sparta was not surrounded by walls, is said to have pointed to the citizens, all filled with one and the same enthusiasm—one united band—and to have answered, “These are the walls of the Spartan State. With these, thus separate and yet one, all enemies can be repelled.” So is it with the city of God, Christ’s own Church. Its citizens, when they are of one mind and heart, are its unassailable bulwarks. The gates of hell cannot prevail against it. Thus, when warfare is over and victory is won, in the city of Peace, where no bulwarks can ever be needed, those who have overcome will join in—“The undisturbed song of pure consent, Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne.” (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*) *Christian union how obtained*:—Those whose inmost hearts, warmed and expanded by the love of Christ, are welded together, as the glowing iron from the furnace, being softened and rendered adhesive by the heat, and so are joined in love spiritual, as the different members of the same body are joined in the union of nature—these hold the same love, these love as brethren; and there is no tie so close, so firm, and so enduring. Every other union is cemented by the cement of

earth, but this by the true attraction of cohesion which is from heaven. (*E. Meade, M.A.*) *Shoulder to shoulder*:—"Now then, Highlanders, shoulder to shoulder!" was the cheery and inspiring word of command that rang out above the roar of battle, as a gallant soldier led his Scotchmen to the charge; and every man, not for himself, but for England, rushed forward as with only "one shoulder" in the regiment, and with the irresistible might of their courage and their valour, swept the broken ranks of their defeated foes before them. Oh! let us hear the voice of our great Captain ringing across this world's great battle-field, and summoning us to give up our petty jealousies and our miserable little differences. "Soldiers of the Cross, shoulder to shoulder!"—against all the evil, all the falseness, all the baseness, all the meanness, all the impurity, all the pride, all the folly, all the mighty army of sin that the Prince of Darkness has set in battle array against us. (*T. T. Shore.*) *Consolation in Christ*:—I. The language of man has received a new coinage of words since his perfection in Eden. Adam could scarce have understood the word consolation, because he did not understand the word sorrow. He soon needed it, but did not find it like the first promise which spake of Christ. And consolation can be found nowhere but in Him. 2. The Holy Spirit is revealed to us as the Comforter, and it is His business to console; but Christ is the consolation. I. CHRIST IN HIS VARIED POSITIONS IS A CONSOLATION FOR THE DIVERS ILLS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD. "All His paths drop fatness," &c. 1. There are times when we look on the past with deepest grief, with fond regrets for the lost Paradise. To meet this, consider Christ in old eternity, as the covenant Head, stipulating to redeem thee; and think of the anticipating mercies of God. 2. If your minds dwell in sadness on the fact that you are absent from the Lord, think of the great truth that Christ of old had delights with the sons of men, and delights to have fellowship with them now. Remember that he appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, to Jacob at the brook Jabbok, to Joshua as Captain of the Lord's host, to the three Hebrew children, and so to-day. 3. Pursue the Master's footsteps as He comes out of the invisible glory and wears the visible garment of humanity. You are tried and troubled, but what better consolation can you have than that Christ is one with you in your nature and suffered all that you are now suffering. (1) You are poor, He had not where to lay His head. (2) You are in pain; He agonized in Gethsemane and was nailed to the cross. "Was there ever sorrow like unto His?" What consolation in the fact that that sorrow expiated sin! 4. Follow Him to the grave. You, through fear of death are all your lifetime subject to bondage, but surely you may find an easy couch where your master slept. But this consolation is as naught compared with that derived from His resurrection. Be not faithless, but believing. 5. See Him ascending to His glory, and anticipate the joy you will have in His triumph. He went as your representative. 6. Behold Him, the great High Priest, the advocate with the Father; and sending down consolations upon His people. 7. But He shall come again as King and complete His ministry of consolation for body as well as for soul. II. CHRIST IN HIS UNCHANGING NATURE A CONSOLATION FOR OUR CONTINUAL SORROWS. 1. He is a surpassing consolation. Talk about the consolations of philosophy; the charms of music; the comfort of friendship; the joys of hope; we have all these and others in superabundance in Him. 2. His consolations are unfailing. All other wells are dry; but this flows in an unceasing stream. 3. His consolations are everlasting; in youth, manhood, old age, in the prospect of death and eternity. 4. They are always within a believer's reach, "a very present help in time of trouble." You may always cheer your heart with Him, when all other things are far away. III. IS CHRIST AN AVAILABLE CONSOLATION FOR ME? 1. Not if you are a self-sufficient moralist trusting in your own righteousness. You are trusting in a lie, and Christ will never be friends with a lie. 2. Not if you are a backslider, unless you return, to which Christ invites you. 3. Yes! if you are a penitent, obedient believer. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Consolation in Christ*:—I. I ask the YOUNG CONVERT if there be any consolation in Christ. "Why there is no consolation without Him," they reply. When anguish took hold of us because of God's judgments we knew not whither to flee. We tried to stifle fear and silence conscience, but our misery increased. We then tried to soothe conscience by reformation, but we found no comfort. We resorted to the means of grace and called upon God, but the answer was, "Cursed is every one that continueth not," &c. Then almost in despair Jesus appeared to us, the burden was removed, and we were made happy. II. I appeal to the ACTIVE CHRISTIAN. He responds, "Yes; His yoke is easy," &c. All our ability to perform duty, and all

our acceptance of it, are from Him, and we glory in Him as our righteousness and strength." III. THE AFFLICTED CHRISTIAN responds, "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." My afflictions have been my greatest blessings. I have had the example of Christ before me, His patience with me, His everlasting arms underneath me. His word or His smile have either removed my afflictions or inspired me with fortitude and joy to bear them. IV. THE DYING CHRISTIAN will reply that he has only a desire to depart, and that while passing through the valley Christ's rod and staff are his comfort. V. THE GLORIFIED SAINTS ascribe everything to Him that brought them out of great tribulation. VI. What do you say? "There may be consolation in Christ, but I can say nothing of it from experience. I could never see any such excellence in Him as to induce me to give up my present enjoyment." But the day will come when you would give all the world for one smile of the consolation of Israel. Inferences: From what has been said—1. We should thank God for His unspeakable gift. 2. We see what enemies they are to themselves who are enemies to Christ. 3. How greatly they mistake who represent religion as gloomy. 4. Let your lives declare this consolation. 5. If there be such consolation here, what must heaven be? (*S. Lavington.*) *The tender sympathy of Christ:*—St. Yoo, of Kernartin, one morning went out and saw a beggar asleep on his doorstep. The beggar had been all night in the cold. The next night St. Yoo compelled this beggar to come into the house and sleep in the saint's bed, while St. Yoo passed the night on the doorstep in the cold. Somebody asked him why that eccentricity? He replied, "It isn't an eccentricity; I want to know how the poor suffer, I want to know their agonies, that I may sympathize with them, and therefore I slept on this cold step last night." That is the way Christ knows so much about our sorrows. (*Talmage.*) *Any comfort of love.—A communion discourse:*—1. The comfort of love—when love is mutual—no one questions. The dependent child, in the arms of the loving mother, experiences it. There is no comfort in selfishness, indifference, and hate. 2. As over against all the reasonings of the enemies of Christianity, there stands out in bold relief this unanswerable fact, that Christ comes with comfort—the comfort of love—to a world full of suffering. The mission of our Saviour, as put by Isaiah (lxi. 2), is to "comfort all that mourn" (Luke iv. 18). As light to the eye, as food and water to the body, more than as medicine to the sick, is this Divine comfort of love to a world full of broken hearts. 3. Stoicism, born before the story of the manger was told, teaching indifference alike to pain and pleasure, illustrates the highest achievement of human wisdom; but it offers no comfort to a suffering world. 4. The Lord's Supper is an object lesson—the culminating expression of God's comforting love. 5. Standing by the cross, we grasp the full measure of God's comforting love. 6. It is not strange that men with honest love have struggled to compass this mystery, but it is strange that men should have converted that which is the comfort of love into a battle-field. (*J. G. Butler, D.D.*) *The emotional in Christianity:*—Notice—I. How EMOTIONAL LIFE HAS BEEN STIFLED. At one time men have been bound by monotonous rituals and artificial formularies, and at another period by rigid theological statements, the result of anatomical analysis—a paring and cutting which takes the life and leaves the letter. Real religion is full of emotion. Read the Psalms and see how they abound in it. II. THE PERVERSION OF EMOTION is also destructive of the soul's true life. This is seen where self is made the sole object of thought. The bitterest torment is the torment of self. The word miser, for example, means "miserable." III. Turn from these to THE TRUE FUNCTION OF EMOTION—"the comfort of love. 1. Love is a comfort in the discoveries it makes of the new possibilities of the soul. Think of the grace of tears! I have seen a man who had been elbowing his way through life amid its rough and selfish oppositions, hammering his heart hard, as it were, lest it by softening should become weak. Such a man, made callous by contact with an unsympathetic world, I have seen stand by the coffin of his child. His stony heart broke, and he was glad to weep. The bondage of the hard, real world was sundered, its barriers dissolved, and he recognized that the long-hidden power to feel was not destroyed. 2. Love is a comfort, inasmuch as it is restful and quiet. Ambition, anger, and jealousy bring pain. These are costly indulgences, for they cause sleeplessness and rob one of strength. But there is comfort in love. The mother bears her babe on her breast, and cradles it in her soul. She pastures her eyes in its face, and its beautiful smile is a reflection of the serene and joyful sense of possession which she herself feels. O the luxury of that love! If in a palace,

its gilded wealth is but tinsel in the atmosphere of such love. Love beautifies the deformed body and withered features. More than that, it trusts against hope. A bridge was begun in California, over a quagmire. Piles were driven and earth was brought, but every effort failed, till finally a simple platform of boards was constructed, on which yielding support people were floated across. So love, with its strong, instinctive trust, floats across chasms that mere reason can never bridge.

3. There is comfort in love, because it harmonizes everything. What a world this would be if love reigned! There would be none to chafe and crowd and irritate. What oil does love pour on troubled waters! I recall the bright tranquillity of an aged grandmother, whose active days were over and who could only sit in her chair and look her benedictions on us all. That smile of hers lubricated all the wheels of daily life; it dried up all tears as the sun dries up the showers, and shed an atmosphere of peace and harmony through the household.

4. Love takes hold on the infinite. Ambition disappoints and pleasure cloy, but love never dies. It has its successive growths. The child's love is fickle and selfish; that of the youthful pair is founded on mutual esteem and gets chilled, but that of a mother yearns to give its best treasures even to the prodigal, and to love him back to purity. There are no mathematics, no question of "seventy times" of forgiveness in such love. It is a picture of the love of God, and lifts us towards the Infinite. True love inspires the missionary, who, like Carey or Martin, goes to far-off lands with the gospel, or to the loathsomely sick in hospital, or to the brutal in prison. This is the secret of Paul's boast that he could do all things, for, to him who thus loveth, "all things are possible." (*J. B. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 3-4. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory.—I. THERE ARE TWO WAYS OF DOING EVEN THE BEST WORK. Through strife and through love. This was seen in chap. i., where two classes of preachers were described. II. ENTIRE SYMPATHY WITH CHRIST WILL ALWAYS HEIGHTEN MAN'S APPRECIATION OF MAN. III. CHRISTIANITY IS THUS THE ONLY HUMANIZING AND FRATERNIZING RELIGION. IV. SELF-SEEKING IS IN UTTER ANTAGONISM TO THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY. V. CHRISTIANITY NEVER ENCOURAGES A DEGRADING VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE. Man is to be "esteemed" by man. Christians are to recognize each other's excellencies. Love's eye is quick to detect virtue in another. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) Observe—I. How THINGS ARE OFTEN DONE—in a spirit of selfish opposition; of vain-glorious assumption. II. How THEY OUGHT TO BE DONE—in humility, giving the honour to others. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Unanimity*.—I. Up to this point the apostle continues his APPEAL FOR UNANIMITY. The spirit of this appeal is that of profound and tender sympathy with Christ. When history gives up her dead it will be found that where the rod has conquered its tens, love has won its thousands. The anxiety for entire oneness in the Church is in harmony with Christ's prayer. Paul was wont to call for this. Absence of union is a reflection on the uniting force. II. THE UNITING FORCE IN A CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS THE LOVE OF CHRIST. Where, then, there is disunion, it is plain that there is either not sufficient of this love, or that it is unequal to the exigencies of the case. Hence the grandeur and urgency of the appeal, "If there be any consolation in Christ;" as though he had said, "Remember that Christ's love is on trial." Men are looking on you as an experiment, and that not only you but Christ Himself will be deeply involved in the event of failure. III. A DISCORDANT CHURCH IS A REFLECTION ON THE MORAL POWER OF THE SAVIOUR, BECAUSE, WITHOUT HIM, THE CHURCH WOULD NOT BE IN EXISTENCE. The world has a right to compare the deeds of the servant with the spirit of the Master, because the connection is moral and involves responsibility. A recently erected edifice, e.g., has fallen. How do men treat the fact? They instantly connect it with the architect or the builder. When a chemical experiment has failed men blame the manipulator. So all the practices of the Church are carried back to Christ, and He is magnified, or put to an open shame, according to their nature. IV. WHAT CONCLUSION ARE WE TO COME TO FROM ALL THIS ON THE SUBJECT OF MUTUAL DISCIPLINE? Are charity and justice to be sundered? Is there not to be a law of right in the Church? Is the garment of love to be thrown over the leper? Hear what Paul says (2 Thess. iii. 6; Rom. xvi. 17). The tones vary but the voice is the same. Christ called Herod a fox, and said that Nathaniel was without guile. God can be warm as summer and chilling as winter. The apostle is perfectly consistent. The voice is as truly one as is the voice of a mother, when she sings her child to slumber, or shrieks at the approach of a ravenous beast. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Evils to be shunned and graces to be cultivated*.—The words depend upon the

former, "Fulfil my joy that ye be," &c. Why? "That nothing be done through strife," &c. As if he should have said, If there be among you contention and vain-glory it is not possible that you should be likeminded, and so my joy is unfulfilled.

I. HE WOULD HAVE NOTHING DONE THROUGH CONTENTION. 1. Contention should be abandoned by Christians, *i.e.*, they should take no pleasure in dissenting from others (Gal. v. 20, 24; Prov. xxvi. 21). The schisms and heresies wherewith the Church at all times is troubled, come commonly from men who take a pleasure in dissent, such as Arius, Nestorius, Macedonius, &c. 2. But may nothing be done through contention? May not Micaiah set himself against four hundred false prophets (2 Chron. xviii.), and Jeremiah strive with the whole earth (Jer. xv. 10), and a pure Church with error? To know whether anything is done through contention two rules are necessary. (1) Is it done upon a humour to contradict whether true or false? (2) When the truth is manifested is the opposition still maintained? II. THE APOSTLE WOULD REPRESS THE EVIL OF

VAIN-GLORY, a vain affection of glory, which is when vain men, to get themselves glory, single themselves in some vanity from the rest (Gal. v. 26). 1. The reason is that men desirous of this cannot, as they should, as becometh Christians, be of one accord with others. 2. It is vain-glory that we are not to affect, for this glory is allowable that men speak well of us, and glorify God on our behalf. III. AS A

REMEDY THE APOSTLE PRESCRIBES MEEKNESS OF MIND. 1. Humility is opposed to contention and vain-glory as a preservative against them, and a preserver of that unity and concord of which they are the bane. 2. Ye see how it is defined to be a virtue, whereby every man, in whatsoever state or place he be, esteemeth other better than himself (Eph. iv. 2). In modesty we are to yield in many things of our own right, so that, though David knew himself to be better than Saul, yet in meekness of mind he may esteem Saul better than himself. IV. ANOTHER REMEDY (ver. 4) IS NOT TO LOOK ON OUR OWN THINGS BUT ON THE THINGS OF OTHERS. Self-seeking is an enemy also to concord. If we look on our own graces, wit, learning, goods, and neglect or contemn those of other men, what else will follow but vain-glory and contention (Luke xviii. 11). We may look on our own things and glorify God, but not to glorify them; and on the things of others, not to envy them but to reverence them. (*H. Airay, D.D.*)

True humility :—I. ITS FEATURES. 1. It distrusts self. 2. Honours others. II. ITS EFFECT. It excludes—1. Strife. 2. Vain-glory. III. ITS OBLIGATION. 1. It is conformable to the mind of Christ. 2. It contributes to social happiness. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Prohibitions and injunctions :—I. WHAT IS FORBIDDEN. 1. Not a proper care for one's own health, reputation, interest, &c., but a selfish disregard of the happiness, claims, and rights of others. II. WHAT IS ENJOINED? not inquisitiveness, but consideration, sympathy, help—because of God's ordination, our own mutual dependence, Christ's example, the pleasure and reward. (*Ibid.*)

Selfishness :—I. ITS NATURE. II. OPERATION. III. CURE. (*Ibid.*) *Vain-glory* :—Vain-glorious men are the scorn of wise men, the admiration of fools, the idols of parasites, and the slaves of their own vanity. (*Lord Bacon.*)

Lowliness of mind :—If we have any graces, they are graces which ought not to elate, but to humble us; and that the more we have received, the more we ought to abase ourselves, as you see among the ears of corn, those bend their head lowest which are the best and the fullest of grain. (*J. Dallié.*)

Humility :—Of all trees, I observe, God hath chosen the vine, a low plant that creeps upon the helpful wall; of all beasts, the soft and patient lamb; of all fowls, the mild and guileless dove. Christ is the rose of the field, and the lily of the valley. When God appeared to Moses, it was not in the lofty cedar, nor the sturdy oak, nor the spreading plane; but in a bush, a humble, slender, abject shrub; as if He would, by these elections, check the conceited arrogance of man. (*Owen Feltham.*)

Christian humility :—Rowland Hill, during his last illness, being asked by Mr. Jay if he felt his personal interest in Christ, replied, "I can see more of my Saviour's glory than of my interest in Him. God is letting me down gently into the grave, and I shall creep into heaven under some crevice of the door." *Avoiding vain-glory* :—When Lacordaire, the most renowned of Roman Catholic orators, was complimented upon being the first preacher in France, he replied, "No; I am the second; Adolphe Monod is the first." (*J. A. James.*)

Frederick the Great once sent a sword to George Washington with the inscription, "From the oldest soldier to the greatest." (*H. O. Mackay.*) *Truthful estimation* :—It is impossible for a man to esteem another better looking than himself, when he is only half as good looking. There may be a difference between men in appearance, but if a man is six feet high he cannot say of another man

who is only three feet high, "I think he is taller than I am," and be a truthful man. If a man is sagacious and he knows it—as he generally does—he cannot say that a wool-gatherer is smarter than he." If a man is generous and kind, he cannot make himself believe that a stingy man is better than he. But this is not the idea. Paul meant simply that a man who is using his whole self for other men, and is striving to help others instead of helping himself, is putting himself below others, or esteeming them better than himself. The mother esteems the child as better than herself in that sense. If either of the two is to lie awake she lies awake. She lies awake that the child may go to sleep. If either she or the babe is to go hungry it is not the babe. She esteems the babe better than herself in the sense that she gives herself away for it; that she bestows her thought and feeling and care on its behalf. Paul means that when we love our fellow men, we ought to be in that general spirit which shall lead us to feel that service rendered to others at some inconvenience, and it may be suffering, is a great deal better than rendering service to ourselves. And it comes back again to that other form, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The estimation of self and others*:—In the ancient fable a man carried two bags slung over his shoulders. In the one in front he carried his neighbour's faults: in the one behind, out of sight, he carried his own—the exact reverse of the Christian way. (*Christian Age.*) *The example of Christ*:—The primary object of the apostle in the next few verses is not to tell how great Christ was by nature, and how low He became, although in his illustration he has done so; but to show how He looked on His own things and the things of others. St. Paul begins the tale of Christ's humiliation by referring to the state of mind which led to it; and the clause which has the prime emphasis laid upon it is that which virtually asserts that He did not regard His own things. Though the form of God was His He did not regard it with a selfish and exclusive attachment, but He laid it aside and became man. He was in the form of God, and did not think it a thing to be eagerly laid hold of to be equal with God in having or exhibiting this form. He emptied Himself of it. He did not look simply to His own things—the glories of the Godhead; but He looked on the things of others, and therefore descended to humanity and death. His heart was not so set upon His glory, that He would not appear at any time without it. There was something which He coveted more—something which He felt to be truly a *ἀπράγμος*, and that was the redemption of a fallen world by His abasement and death. Or to speak after the manner of men, two things were present to His mind. Either continuance in the form of God, and being always equal with God, but allowing humanity to perish; or vailing this form and foregoing this equality for a season, and delivering by His condescension and agony the fallen progeny of Adam. He gave the latter the preference from His possession of His "mind," and in indistinguishable generosity He looked at the things of others, and descended with His splendour eclipsed—appeared not as God in glory, but clothed in flesh; not in royal robes, but in the dress of a village youth; not as a Deity in fire, but a man in tears; not in a palace, but in a manger; not with a thunderbolt in His hand, but with the hammer and hatchet of a Galilean mechanic, and in this way He gave the Church an example of that self-abnegation and kindness which the apostle here enforces, "Look not every one on his own things, but also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." (*Prof. Eadie.*) *Humility and joyfulness*:—Our humiliations work out our most elevated joys. The way that a drop of rain comes to sing in the leaf that rustles in the top of the tree all the summer long, is by going down to the roots first and from thence ascending to the bough. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 4. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.—*Our own and others' things*:—This is but a practical application of sentiments and dispositions already enforced. The vain-glorious spirit is fussily and uselessly concerned with the affairs of others; but love, the faculty of soul-sight, looks at others' endowments and virtues and appreciates them; at others' privileges and rights, and defends them; at others' blessings, and rejoices in the possession of them; at others' sorrows, and weeps over them; at others' wants, and would supply them. And further, what Paul would have the Philippians do Christ Jesus had done (ver. 5, &c.). The life of Jesus is a perfect exposition of the text. I. WHAT DO THESE WORDS PROHIBIT? 1. A supreme and exclusive regard to our own things. It forbids—(1) The closing of the eye to the things of others. (2) The shutting of the heart. (3) The closing of the hand. 2. Why—

(1) Because it is not Godlike. Religion is Godlikeness. (2) Because it transgresses the laws which demand love. (3) Because it does not become the gospel of Christ. If God in our salvation has looked on our things so as to provide for our complete uplifting, sheer consistency demands compliance with the text. (4) Because it is injurious to self and to Christ's cause. II. WHAT DO THESE WORDS REQUIRE? 1. Not the neglect of our own things—"also." Nor does it sanction the conduct of the busybody in other men's matters. But—2. Sympathy with others in whatever state they may be seen by us. We are to "weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice." Competitors in any calling find the latter very difficult. 3. Heart readiness to defend and serve others according to our opportunity and ability. 4. The avoidance of all that will damage the things of others. In a word, look not as the Priest and Levite looked, but as the good Samaritan looked—so as to enlarge the heart and open the hands. III. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE PROHIBITION AND REQUIREMENT OBLIGATORY. 1. They are addressed to "every" Christian man. Other men cannot translate them into life. We do not wonder that men say, "Your morality is too high for us." Of course it is for those who are in the horrible pit, but not for those who are walking on the high table-land with Jehovah. "Every man" (1) however poor. You cannot give money, but you can give sympathy and prayer. (2) However rich. Some men give money to be exempt from personal attention to others. They think they are not required to work, only to give. (3) Masters are to look with careful and sympathetic eyes on their servants' things, and servants on their masters'. (4) Tradesmen on the things of their rivals. (5) Patriots on the things of other lands. 2. "On the things." (1) Although in competition with one's own. (2) Although not quite to one's taste. (3) Although not always convenient. (4) Including the health, wealth, honour, peace, comfort, well-being and well-doing of others. (5) The others may be strangers, but they are men for whom Christ died; rivals, but they are neighbours whom I am required to love; employers or workpeople, but they may be fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; or they may be enemies, but even them we are to love. Conclusion: 1. The text is one of the many illustrations of the practical character of New Testament teaching. Christ's doctrines are the inspiration of its ethics. Nearly every point of Christian theology is raised in the subsequent paragraph to enforce the text. Religion is a sham if it be not practical. 2. The text exhibits a high standard of conduct, but it leads us in a path in which we may hear the Good Shepherd's voice. He speaks these words through His apostle; elsewhere He spoke them through His life. Look at him providing for His mother amidst the agonies of the cross. 3. The text shows that a selfish man cannot be a Christian. 4. Such precepts as these exalt the dispensation to which we belong. What must Christ's religion be if this be a precept in harmony with its doctrines, facts, ordinances, and spirit? (*S. Martin.*) *The evils of selfishness:—*1. It is true that our own things have the first claim on our regard (Prov. xxvii. 23; Rom. xii. 17). Persons without wealth cannot be generous without first seeking their own profit. Nay, attention to a lawful calling where nothing is given away benefits the community. The carpenter and the mason may have exclusive regard to their earnings, but the house they build is not less valuable. The mariner who handles dexterously the tackling of a ship, may aim only at promotion, but he is the undesigned benefactor of all on board. So with the vessel of state. 2. On these grounds some have ridiculed all philanthropy, and have pronounced a vigorous selfishness the best disinterestedness. With this the text remonstrates. Let no man look on his own things "only." This exclusive looking is—I MEAN IN ITSELF. The effect of such action may be magnificent, but that does not alter its inglorious character. Each of the lower animals in satisfying its immediate wants tenders some service to the whole economy of life. Nay, insensible matter has comprehensive usefulness. The eye is affected by its colours, the ear by its vibrations, &c., and each molecule has its share in imparting the stability of attraction to the stellar universe. For a man to tell us, then, that he is doing good when it is not his aim is to appropriate a praise due equally to brutes and vermin. You must do good with an intent to do it, and find your motive and reward in communicating bliss. II. RUINOUS TO SOCIETY. 1. How far is the adage, "Every man for himself," to be carried? (1) Is not a man to act for his family? Then the brutes he scorns will be his censors. (2) But if a wife or child is to be cared for, why not an aged father, or widowed mother, or dependent sister? (3) And if relation create claim in one case, why not in all? (4) And if obligation extend to all the members of a family connection, how shall it disown neighbourhood and country? for one God

hath made us, and we are all His offspring. 2. To think or act otherwise will leave countless evils without remedy, and create manifold disasters. The landed proprietor will look only to his rents, the manufacturer think only of the number of his "hands," the railway contractor strive only to make the most of his navvies without the least care for evils which may entail ruin and death. The neglect of superiors foment dislike, and induces all those jarrings which marked the decline of ancient commonwealths. 3. The man who cares for none but himself does harm by his very presence. He is like an iceberg, which, straying into warmer latitudes, reduces instantly their temperature, replaces their pure air by fogs, the bright sun by gloom, and a luxuriant vegetation by decay. III. OPPOSED TO THE WHOLE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL. Scripture associates the conceptions of God and goodness. He did not need to give His bounties for His own happiness. He does not confine them to friends; His foes share them. But He is more than good; He "so loved the world," &c., and He who was sent in love, came and suffered in love, to teach us not to look on our own things, but also on the things of others. (*D. King, L.L.D.*)

Christian disinterestedness:—I. WHAT THE TEXT FORBIDS. 1. Negatively. Not proper self-attention, which reason and Scripture combine to enforce. You may, and aright, look on your own things—(1) As to the soul. This is the one thing needful. (2) As to your bodily health, which is to be valued not only for enjoyment, but for usefulness. "Life is yours"; therefore take care of it. (3) As to your reputation. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," and a Christian cannot afford to be indifferent to it. (4) As to the welfare of your family, otherwise you are "worse than an infidel." (5) As to your secular affairs. Idleness is condemned. "If any would not work, neither should he eat"; "not slothful in business." 2. Positively. Look not exclusively. "Also on the things of others"; "No man liveth unto himself"; "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." II. WHAT IT ENJOINS. 1. How are we to look on the things of others? (1) Not inquisitively; (2) nor enviously; (3) nor unconcernedly; (4) but so as to have an interest in them by sympathy. 2. Why are we to look? (1) Because God commands it; (2) because of our mutual need; (3) the pleasures of beneficence; (4) the reward of benevolence; (5) the example of Christ. (*W. Jay.*)

Christian obligation:—Man's first obligation is to save his own soul; his second to save the souls of others. The first is implied, the second taught in our text. Observe—I. THE PERSONAL STATE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN PLACES HIM UNDER AN OBLIGATION TO PROMOTE THE WORK OF GOD. Being initiated into the faith and privileges of the Christian covenant, he is bound to hold it as a whole. Now, Christianity contemplates not only his personal illumination, happiness, and preparedness for heaven, but it equally contemplates the same privileges for others, and constitutes saved men its agents. The true Christian, then, does not meditate upon misery and leave it in its destitution. II. THE SPIRITUAL GRACES AND GIFTS POSSESSED BY THE CHURCH LIE HER UNDER AN OBLIGATION OF DEVOTED ZEAL TO GOD. 1. Spiritual blessings can only be enjoyed in spiritual channels. You cannot bestow the tenderness of Christian affection on gold and commerce and art. They must be employed religiously. 2. The moral power of Christianity can only be employed morally, and no other form of power—that of genius, science, oratory, magistracy, &c., can supply its place in the Church. It is of no great consequence on what nature this moral force operates. Take a feeble branch and engraft it on a living tree, and it partakes of the beauty and vigour of the tree, and bears fruit. And this moral power operates individually, as in Howard, Wilberforce, and Wesley, or it may be centralized in the Church. But we must be careful not to drown the individual in the society. 3. The Church also possesses the gifts of the Spirit, which can only be devoted to religious objects. On these and on Him who gives them depends the life of the Church. 4. Other gifts are superadded for the purpose of conveying the truth to the world. III. FROM THE SITUATION OF CHRISTIANS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD THEY ARE BOUND TO PROMOTE ITS INTERESTS. Christian patriotism suggests that we should defend the faith, and Christian philanthropy that we should extend it. IV. THE GREAT ALTERNATIVE BEFORE US—WHETHER WE AND THE WORLD WILL GO TO HEAVEN OR HELL—MAKES IT IMPERATIVE ON US TO DO OUR UTMOST TO PROMOTE TRUE RELIGION. (*J. Dixon, D.D.*) *Doing good*:—I. THE EVIL THE TEXT GUARDS US AGAINST—Selfishness. Self-preservation is indeed the first law of nature, but we are bound to observe the higher law of grace—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." II. THE DUTY THE TEXT ENJOINS—To care for and promote the welfare of our fellow-men. True benevolence demands—1. Our personal exertion towards our families, friends, neighbourhood,

world. 2. Our property. 3. Our influence. 4. Our prayers. III. SOME MOTIVES TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THIS DUTY. 1. He who cares only for self is a useless member of society. 2. The law of nature requires the exercise of beneficence (Acts x. 26). 3. The pleasure of doing good invites to it. 4. A regard for the esteem of our fellow-men. 5. The Word of God enforces it. 6. The example of Christ sets it forth. 7. The hope of standing without confusion before the judgment seat of Christ is an important consideration. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*)

Sectarianism:—What is it? It is the overweening zeal for a part to the prejudice of the whole, and it has four great spheres. I. The sectarianism of THE INDIVIDUAL. 1. Our first association with religion is its bearing on our own salvation. All the world for us centres round the question, "What must I do to be saved?" And so far we must for the time look on our own things, and not on the things of others. And we want to see more of this personal conviction and individual dealing of the soul with Christ. 2. But twin monsters are begotten alongside of the genuine conviction, and begin at once to make a personal interest in religion a sectarian interest. (1) The limitation of the idea of salvation to safety from misery. I do not underrate the part "the terror of the Lord" has played in conversion; but we are not for ever to stand on the brink of the pit, but to use the vantage ground Christ has given us. Be no longer anxious about your own soul. Leave that to Christ, and be doing His work. The man who is ever thinking of personal safety will endanger that safety; but he that loses himself in Christ shall find Him. (2) The continuance of mere personal considerations as the staple of religion. There are those who think that Christian separateness means being very unlike other men. II. The sectarianism of THE CONGREGATION. 1. I would speak with the deepest sympathy of congregational life. Our most blessed hours are connected with it, and its records are a ground for thankfulness. And it is to be viewed in relation to its whole work, Sunday school, tract society, &c. 2. But it is subject to sectarianism, and that in a more virulent form, because of the strength of its organization. I find it in the pronouns which appropriate religion—"my," "our." These contain—(1) The best of love. When we mean by them, This is my Church; These are our forms of doing good; May God grant success to our cause; we give expression to an appropriation of truth without which no Church can thrive. (2) But they contain the worst of sect, and mean "ours" to the exclusion, and even prejudice, of others. "We express true churchmanship," i.e., others do not; "We are liberal, others are narrow," &c. And then wretched pecuniary interests intervene, and we are glad that some wealthy man has left one Church to join ours, or that we are successful where others fail. 3. The best means to counteract this is to take an interest in another Church's work, or at least to join it on a common platform. III. The sectarianism of THE DENOMINATION. It is this we usually think of as sectarianism. 1. But for two causes, their historical greatness and the overweening claims of a portion of the clergy, there would be nothing to be feared; for the belief in the Divine sanction of the denominations has waned considerably in the last two centuries, and each contributes its quota to full Christian life; and again they have been very useful as checks and chasteners to each other. 2. But the advantages of amity among the denominations are obvious. (1) While we maintain a separate and defiant attitude we waste our energies, weaken ourselves for all good purposes, and present a divided front towards sacerdotalism, infidelity, and indifference. The result of our divisions is the alienation of mankind; when we shall be at one, the world will believe in its Saviour. (2) We lose the advantage of effective mutual admonition and encouragement, by not thoroughly understanding each other. (3) It is pre-eminently in the interest of souls that we should cease from sectarianism. We are more anxious to make them members of our denomination than to make them members of Christ. IV. The sectarianism of RELIGION. 1. We speak of that alone as religion which consists in prayer, Bible reading, public worship, &c.; but surely the administration of justice, the enactment of laws, education, &c., are religious. The Bible knows nothing of the distinction between secular and sacred, but only that between good and evil. 2. The man who marks out a particular sphere as religious, and bans the rest as worldly, makes religion a sectarian thing which grows narrower and pettier continually. The religion that has no message for the workman in his shop, the artist in his studio, the scientist in his laboratory, is in danger of alienating, not drawing mankind. (*The Hon. and Rev. W. H. Fremantle, M.A.*) *Regard for others*:—Two boats were sent out from Dover to relieve a vessel in distress. The fury of the tempest overset one of them, which contained

three sailors, one of whom sank. The two remaining sailors were floating on the deep; a rope was thrown to one of them from the other boat, but he refused it, crying out, "Fling it to Tom; he is just ready to go down. I can last some time longer." They did so. Tom was drawn into the boat. The rope was then flung to the generous tar, just in time to save him also from drowning. (*W. Baxendale.*)

Unselfish care for others:—A very poor and aged man, busied in planting and grafting apple-trees, was interrupted by the question, "Why do you plant trees who cannot hope to eat the fruit of them?" He raised himself up, and, leaning on his spade, replied, "Some one planted trees before I was born, and I have eaten the fruit; I now plant for others, that the memorial of my gratitude may exist when I am dead and gone. (*Ibid.*)

Disinterested friendship:—The Rev. Thomas Thomason, while at Cambridge, having once gained the Norrissian prize for a theological essay, tried a second time for it, but was surpassed by his friend Jerram. The latter thus describes the incident: "One morning Thomason hastened into my room, followed by one of the beadles, and with a gladness of heart which I shall never forget, told me that the prize was awarded to me, and that the beadle, not knowing my room, had called at his and asked where he could find me. I sincerely believe my friend could scarcely have rejoiced more had he a second time succeeded." Thomason's account to his mother was as follows:—"I have lost the prize; Jerram has got it. I am not mortified; it is still in the family, a young man of the same college, of the same Church and profession. I have had it once; it ill becomes me to murmur." It is pleasant to learn that Thomason again gained the same prize on two successive occasions. (*J. F. B. Tinsling, B.A.*)

Religious selfishness common:—I have been a member of your Church for thirty years," said an elderly Christian to his pastor, "and when I was laid by with sickness only one or two came to see me. I was shamefully neglected." "My friend," said the pastor, "in all those thirty years how many sick have you visited?" "Oh," he replied, "it never struck me in that light. I thought only of the relation of others to me, and not of my relation to them."

Self-sacrifice for others:—An engineer in the South-west, on a locomotive, recently saw a train coming with which he must collide. He resolved to stand at his post and slow up the train until the last minute, for there were passengers behind. The engineer said to the fireman, "Jump! One man is enough on this engine. Jump!" The fireman jumped, and was saved. The crash came. The engineer died at his post. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*)

Christian disinterestedness:—It was said of Wilberforce that he was asked one day by a pious lady how the salvation of his own soul fared in the midst of business entailed on him by his efforts for the slave, and that he answered (surely a noble answer), "Madam, I forgot for the time I had a soul." (*W. H. Fremantle, M.A.*)

Others before self:—Thomas Sampson was a working miner, and worked hard for his bread. The captain of the mine said to him on one occasion, "Thomas, I've got an easier berth for you, where there is little comparatively to do, and where you can earn more money. Will you accept it?" What do you think he said? "Captain, there's our poor brother Gregory. He has a sick body, and he is not able to work as hard as I am. I fear his toil will shorten his useful life. Will you let him have the berth?" The captain, pleased with his generosity, sent for Gregory, and gave him the berth. Thomas was gratified, and added, "I can work a little longer yet." (*Sunday Magazine.*)

The difficulty of looking on the things of others:—In the journals of the sainted wife of Jonathan Edwards it is recorded how one of her great struggles was to acquiesce in the revival work in the town being done by another minister than her husband. (*W. H. Fremantle, M.A.*)

Considering others before self:—A German countryman went one day with his four sons to the neighbouring town to transact some business. While there, in the market-place, he bought five peaches. One of these he kept for his wife, who was at home, and the others he gave to his boys. When they were sitting round the fire the next evening, he thought he would ask each of his sons what he had done with his peach. The eldest said he had eaten his, but had kept the stone to plant in the garden, in hopes that it would grow up and bear some peaches as good as the one he had so much enjoyed. The youngest boy confessed he had eaten his own peach and thrown the stone away, and after his return home had helped his mother to eat half of her peach! The second eldest boy told how he had picked up the stone which his little brother had thrown away, and cracked it, and eaten the kernel. "It was nice and sweet," he added, "and I sold my own peach for so much money that I have enough to buy several peaches now with what I got for it." The third son then had to tell his tale. The others had told all theirs out at

once with no hesitation and no shame, but this little lad blushed as he began his story: "I took my peach to a poor little friend who has been in bed for so long, and suffers so much pain. He refused to take it from me, so I put it on his bed and ran away." His mother's kisses, as she heard these words, were far sweeter on his young lips than any fruit. (*T. T. Shore.*)

Vers. 5-11. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.—Observe—I. THE PICTURE. Majesty—condescension—suffering. II. THE LESSON. Humility—love—self-sacrifice. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Lessons taught by the humiliation and exaltation of Christ:*—The apostle was exhorting the Philippians to imitate the humility and disinterestedness of the Saviour. But there could have been no force in the example if Jesus Christ had not been God. I. A BRIEF ILLUSTRATION OF THIS IMPRESSIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE REDEEMER. 1. Jesus Christ is here presented as subsisting originally in the splendour of Deity. "Form of God" must not be explained to mean any temporary manifestation such as the Theophanies of the Old Testament. Fire, *e.g.*, is the symbol of Deity, as was the Shechinah, but not the form. That has an integral meaning. 2. He humbled Himself. Had He not done so God would never have been seen by His creatures. Notice the gradation. (1) Subordination. "He took the form of a servant." (2) Human subordination. (3) Obedient subordination. (4) Self-sacrificing subordination. 3. Elevation. (1) A name above every name. (2) A dignity recognized by all. II. THE ALL IMPORTANT LESSONS. 1. Disinterestedness. "Look not every one on His own things," &c. This is just what Christ did, and that, not because there was any worthiness in man, but out of love. 2. Self-sacrifice. There is no religion without an imitation of Christ's self-abandonment. 3. Perseverance. If anything could have stopped Christ in his work He would have been stopped. Conclusion: Let, then, this mind be in you. I argue with you on the ground—1. Of your Christianity. O Christian, from whence did you derive your name. 2. Of gratitude. What do you owe to Christ? 3. Of the intercession of Christ. 4. Of the great worth of the soul. 5. Of the glories of the kingdom of Christ. (*T. Lessey, M.A.*) *The humiliation and glory of Christ:*—I. LET US TRACE THE HUMILIATION AND GLORY OF CHRIST. 1. The point of departure, where is it? On earth or in heaven? In humanity or in Deity? Those who contend from the simply human view of the nature of Christ say that He began to condescend somewhere in His earthly lifetime, as if that could be a mighty argument for humility. No, we must begin where Paul begins. "In the form of God" can only mean possessing the attributes of God (2 Cor. iv. 4; Heb. i. 3; John i. 1). 2. Being thus Divine, He did not deem His equality with God a thing to grasp at and eagerly retain. He emptied Himself of His heavenly glory, and having humbled Himself as a common man He humbled himself yet more, becoming obedient to the death which only the lowest malefactors could die. 3. Of course there could be no essential change in this humiliation. Jesus could never be less than Divine. The Divine glory dwelt within the human nature as within a veil. It shone out at times and then all was dark again. The glory of His boyhood was seen in the temple; of His manhood on the Mount of Transfiguration; He gave but a look in the garden out of His divinity and the soldiers fell back. 4. At the lowest point of the humiliation the ascent begins in the worship of the penitent thief, in the words of the soldier, in the reverence shown to His body, in His resurrection and triumphant ascension. 5. The name is the character, influence; and to that all creation shall do homage, because in some way affected by it. II. THE PRACTICAL PURPOSE. 1. The inculcation of humility. You see what Christ has done. Do likewise; be lowly, go down. Ah, the contrast between Christ and many who bear His name! He in greatness and glory coming down so far! We in our blindness and littleness, all struggling to rise. 2. If His life is the model of my own; if His cross repeats itself in the cross I bear for Him; then there comes to me a truer elevation. "God hath highly exalted Him," and that is a pledge that those who have been with Christ in His humiliation shall together sit on His throne. 3. Wherefore work out your own salvation—by self-denial, humility, and with this fear and trembling, because it is the only thing you need fear about. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The supreme example of self-renunciation:*—These words are the grandest and most profound, and at the same time the most copious and unrestrained which St. Paul ever used on this subject, his final and finished formula of the Incarnation. It is wonderful to observe with what tranquillity, ease, and unconsciousness of effort

this amazing subject is introduced. All comes as a matter of course. He does not say "Behold, I show you a mystery." It flows as naturally from His pen as a simple motive for Christian duty, as if it were the commonplace of theological truth as familiar to them as to Himself. So, doubtless, it was. I. THERE IS ONE PERSON HERE AND ONE ONLY. The name Jesus Christ is given to that Person, who, before the Incarnation, was "in the form of God," and afterwards, "in the form of a servant." He may be called by any name, "Son of God" or "Son of man," but that name always signifies His Person as possessed of two natures. Accordingly, that Person may be the subject of two classes of predicates. The Divine nature never has a human attribute, nor the human a Divine, but the Divine-human Person may be spoken of as having both. So here St. Paul is referring to a thought of the Eternal Son which implied that He was not yet man. The example is that of Christ Jesus in the flesh, but its strength and obligation are based upon the fact that it was the divinity in Christ that began the mediatorial humiliation.

II. THE PRE-EXISTENT NATURE AND FORM OF BEING is here strikingly described. Paul uses an expression which indicates the relation of the Second Person of the Trinity to the First, that of eternal subordination without implying inferiority. As the Father cannot be without the Son, as being cannot be without its image, so the Godhead in the Second Person had its form—the essential attributes and glories of Deity which He might lay aside without losing the divinity of His Eternal generation.

III. THE ACT OF INCARNATION IS ATTRIBUTED TO THAT PRE-EXISTENT PERSON. He resolved to empty Himself of all the glories, prerogatives, and manifestations of the Godhead and animate a human nature. This was His own act. There was a concurrence of the Holy Trinity. The Father by an eternal necessity begetting His Son, begets Him again in indissoluble union with our nature. The Holy Ghost is the Divine instrument of the Father's will in that office. But it was the Son's own act to conjoin with Himself this new man. Now, though our human nature is not an ignoble thing, yet His coming in the likeness of a nature that evil had defiled, was a condescension which might be termed a humiliation. His Divine repute was for a season suspended, and He was reputed among the transgressors.

IV. THE REALITY OF HIS ASSUMPTION OF HUMAN NATURE is set forth by three expressions. 1. "Form of a servant." The entire history of our Saviour's human existence was that of the mediatorial servant of God (Isa. xlii.). As such He proclaimed Himself, and was proclaimed (Acts iii. 26). The term is parallel with "form" of God, and signifies that in His human nature His manifestation was that of the servitude of redemption. Our human nature was the towel with which He girded Himself (John xiii.). He took our humanity only that He might serve in it. 2. "Likeness of men" limits itself to the mere assumption of our nature, and indicates that He became man otherwise than others become men; that His human nature was perfect, but it was representative human nature, "likeness of men." So that the apostle's careful definition leaves room for all that range of difference between Him and us that theology is constrained in reverence to establish. 3. "Found in fashion as a man" completes the picture of the Incarnation by realizing it and giving it location among men. He was all by which a man could be observed, judged, estimated. He was "found" numbered as one of the descendants of Adam.

V. THE DESIGN OF THE WONDERFUL DESCENT (ver. 8). The emptying ends with the Incarnation; but the example of self-renunciation is further exhibited. 1. The death of the cross was imposed on Him as a great duty. Much is here omitted because of the special purpose in view. Paul says nothing about our Lord's birth under the Mosaic, nor His obligations as under the moral law, nor the endless indignities that He accepted. He singles out the one tremendous imposition that He should die for sin. Death was the goal of a great obedience. All other duties tended to this, and found in this their consummation. 2. This great obedience was voluntarily assumed in humility. It was not merely death, but a humiliating and cursed death. But to this He submitted, passive before men because inwardly passive before God.

VI. THIS SPONTANEOUS, PERFECT SELF-SACRIFICE IS AN EXAMPLE, the ruling and regulative principle, indeed, of all Christian devotion and service. That man's salvation required this is taken for granted, but is not dwelt upon. As an example, however, it may be viewed under two aspects. 1. As the perfect exhibition of self-renunciation. (1) It is obvious that Paul lays great stress on the pre-incarnate condescension. He whose Deity was that of the Son's eternal exhibition of the form of His Father, did not reckon the display of His Divine glory, of the perfections "equal with God," a thing to hold fast; but let them go for man's salvation, and

lived among the conditions of human nature. This was His self-sacrifice. We dare not attempt to define here: there is a danger in two directions. We may so dwell upon the unchangeableness of the Divine nature as to reduce all the condescension to his incarnate estate; or we may so exaggerate the Divine self-sacrifice as to attribute an impossible abnegation of His Divine attributes. Enough that the New Testament does not reveal to us a Trinity inaccessible to those sentiments which we regard as the highest attributes of human virtue. The pattern of our loftiest human excellence is in God Himself. (2) But we now descend to the exhibition of self-sacrifice in the mediatorial Man of sorrows. Concerning this the words teach us to mark its absolute perfection in every respect as an exhibition of self-sacrifice, and its absolute perfection also as a pattern to us. When he has brought the Redeemer down from His transcendent height, he exhibits Him with reverent joy and tenderness as the supreme pattern of sacrificing love. But he only refers to the mind that was in Christ, and that mind was the surrender of all and the endurance of all for the good of man. There is no detail of the Saviour's sufferings. 2. The reality of the example to us. Elsewhere it is said that Christ in His meek endurance and self-sacrificing devotion left us an example. Paul shows that all who are Christ's undergo in their degree His lot and share His destiny. "If any man will serve Me," &c. Those who shall reign with Christ must first suffer with Him. The spirit of union with Christ imparts this first principle of the Saviour's consecration; it must become the ruling principle in us also. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *The great example*:—The apostle enforces the previous counsels to the cultivation of self-denying love by the argument strongest of all to the Christian heart, the example of the Lord Jesus. I. GOD CONDESCENDED TO BECOME MAN. 1. Christ did not change His nature, an impossibility, but His "form," and in the surrender of this Divine dignity for us points to the duty of our surrender of ease, rank, repute, and even life, for the good of others. 2. The work of love seemed a greater thing than His retention of what was originally His own, and not an object of mere ambition. 3. So He emptied Himself of this "form," the glory in which He was revealed to the angels, and to Moses, and Isaiah. (1) By assuming the form of a servant, its opposite. The King became a subject. (2) How He took that form is explained—"being made in the likeness of men," not of a man; He was the representative of the race. Here, then, we have the mystery of mysteries. Our Redeemer is God, or our hope in Him were baseless, but His Deity was veiled in flesh. II. AS A MAN HE WENT DOWN INTO THE DEPTHS OF HUMILIATION. 1. His obedience exhibits—(1) The reality of His manhood. Subjection is conceivable only in a created nature. (2) His exemplariness; as a servant of God, he is a member of the class to which all Christians belong. 2. His obedience led Him to the death of the cross, a death—(1) The most cruel. (2) The most disgraceful. 3. All this was voluntary. III. IN REWARD FOR HIS OBEDIENCE HE WAS CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR. 1. This was done by the Father who in the economy of Redemption represents the majesty of the God-head. 2. This was done for the purpose of securing for Christ universal supremacy and homage. 3. The end of all was the glory of God the Father in conformity with the Son's prayer—"Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Conclusion: The fitness of the wonderful paragraph as an argument to enforce the exhortation. All this was out of love for you. Imitate this love in its devotion, self-forgetfulness, humility. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) *An appeal for the cultivation of a right spirit*:—This comprehensive passage can be used for theological purposes only by accommodation. It is a practical exhortation rather than a theological disquisition. Paul is not arguing a doctrinal point, or rebutting an heresy. There is no evidence that the Philippians were unsound. It is simply the groundwork for a powerful appeal for the cultivation of a right spirit. Paul's argument, based on the Messianic history, may be thrown into this shape. You Philippians have been a great joy to me, but my joy is not quite full. Your unanimity is not perfect. "Let this mind be in you," &c. That mind was condescending, unselfish, most loving. Some of you imagine yourselves too elevated to mingle with others. But Christ, who was infinitely elevated, stooped to servitude and death. Let His mind, then, be in you, and nothing shall be done through strife and vain-glory. The highest should prove his highness by serving the lowly. I. EVERY FEATURE IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER MAY BE CARRIED BACK TO AND EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF THE WHOLE HISTORY OF CHRIST. The Christian is always representing or misrepresenting Christ. II. THESE DELINEATIONS OF CHRIST REVEAL THE TRUE METHOD OF RENDERING SERVICE TO MAN. Human deliverance and progress

will remain a theory only until men come to work on the method here stated. Great philanthropic programmes must begin at Bethlehem, and comprehend the mysteries of Calvary if they would ascend from Bethany to the heavens. To serve man Christ became man. So in serving others we must identify ourselves with them. This identification with the race made Christ accessible to all classes. We too must go down. III. CHRIST'S PIETY WAS NOT A MERE INDEX FINGER. Instead of saying, "That is the way," He said, "I am the way." Men fail when they say "that" instead of "I," when they give a pronoun instead of the living substantive of their own sanctified character. Instead of seeing how the world's misery looks after it has flown from a secretarial pen, and taken form upon the clean foolscap of a great society we should lay our own white hand on the gashed and quaking heart of humanity. IV. CONDESCENSION IS NOT DEGRADATION. 1. Was Christ degraded? Go into the territories of wretchedness and guilt upon any other business than that of Christ and you will be degraded. Benevolence will come forth unpolluted as a sunbeam. 2. More: How do you teach a child to read? By beginning at the rudimentary line, and accompanying Him patiently through all introductory processes. So Christ does in the moral education of the race. V. ARE WE TO COME DOWN TO MEN OR ARE MEN TO BE BROUGHT UP TO US? Both. We have here also a revelation of the glory which is in reserve for those who adopt Christ's method. Christ had that glory of right: His followers have it of grace. Christ promises exaltation to all who overcome. Conclusion: 1. God overrules the most improbable means to the accomplishment of the greatest ends. 2. The true worker is never finally overlooked. "Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great." Why? "Because He hath poured out His soul unto death." In apparent weakness may be the sublimest mystery of power. A man may be conquering when in a very passion of suffering. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The mind of Christ*:—I. ITS FEATURES. Humble—obedient—loving—self-sacrificing. II. ITS REWARD. Exaltation—honour—glory. III. ITS OBLIGATION. We are redeemed by Him—must be conformed to Him. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christ is our pattern*:—It is said that, thinking to amuse him, his wife read to Dr. Judson some newspaper notices, in which he was compared to one or other of the apostles. He was exceedingly distressed: and then he added, "Nor do I want to be like them; I do not want to be like Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, nor any mere man. I want to be like Christ. We have only one perfectly safe Exemplar,—only One, who, tempted like as we are in every point, is still without sin. I want to follow Him only, copy His teachings, drink in His Spirit, place my feet in His footprints, and measure their shortcomings by these, and these only. Oh, to be more like Christ!" *How to obtain the mind of Christ*:—As certain silk-worms have their silk coloured by the leaves on which they feed, so, if we were to feed on Christ, and nothing else but Christ, we should become pure, holy, lowly, meek, gentle, humble; in a word, we should be perfect even as He is. What wonderful meat this must be! O my brethren, if you have ever tried the flesh and blood of Jesus as your soul's diet, you will know that I am not speaking vain words! There is no such sustenance for faith, love, patience, joy, as living daily upon Jesus, our Saviour. You who have never tasted of this heavenly bread, had better listen to the word, "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The lesson of humility*:—The heathen had semblances or images of well-nigh every virtue. He had many excellences, here and there, which put Christians to shame. Wretchedly corrupt as life was upon the whole, still not individuals only, but even nations, had great single virtues. The heathen had self-devotion, contentment, contempt of the world, and of the flesh; he had fortitude, endurance, self-denial, abstemiousness, temperance, chastity, even a sort of reverence for God whom he knew not; but he had not humility. The first sin, the wish to be as God, pride, spoiled them all. Man, in his natural state, claims, as his own, what is God's; and so he displeases God, whom he robs of His honour. And so the first beginning of Christian virtues is to lay aside pride. It is to own that we have nothing, that so we may receive all and hold all of God; and when, as being in Christ and partaking of His riches, we begin to have, still to own that, of our own, we have nothing. But not only in general or towards God have we need to be humble. It enters in detail into every Christian grace, so that well-nigh the whole substance of the Christian discipline is humility. Every mountain of human pride must be brought low, to prepare the Lord's way; and so shall the lowly valley be exalted. Without humility, there can be no resignation, since humility alone knows its sufferings and sorrows to be less than it deserves; no contentment, for humility alone knows that it has more

blessings than it deserves ; no peace, for contention cometh of want of humility, no kindness, for pride envieth ; and this St. Paul assigns as the very reason why "love envieth not," that it "is not puffed up," that is, is humble. How shall there, without it, be any Christian grace, since all are the fruits of God's Holy Spirit, and He "resisteth the proud and giveth grace unto the lowly ?" He "dwelleth in the humble and contrite heart." If love be the summit of all virtue, humility is the foundation. He humbled Himself, because He loved us : we must be humble, in order to love Him ; for to such only will He impart His love. "The publican would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven," and God was more pleased with the confession of sins in the sinner, than in the recounting of the virtues of the righteous. The Canaanitish woman was content with the portion of the dogs, and she had "the children's bread." The gate of life is low as well as narrow. Through the lowly portal of repentance, are we brought into the Church ; and humble as little children must we again become, if we would enter the everlasting gates. Well indeed may the Christian be ashamed not to be humble, for whom God became humble. But this humility must be deep down in our nature, and so striking root downwards thou shalt bear fruit upwards ; so laying a deep foundation, shall thy house remain. The tree falls with any gust of wind when the root is near the surface ; the house which has a shallow foundation, is soon shaken. High and wide as the noblest trees spread, so deep and wide their roots are sunk below ; the more majestic and nobler a pile of building, the deeper its foundation ; their height is but an earnest of their lowliness ; you see their height, their lowliness is hidden ; the use of sinking thus deep is not plain to sight, yet were they not thus lowly, they could not be thus lofty. Dig deep then the foundation of humility, so only mayest thou hope to reach the height of charity ; for by humility alone canst thou reach that Rock which shall not be shaken, that is Christ. Founded by humility on that Rock, the storms of the world shall not shake thee, the torrent of evil custom shall not bear thee away, the empty winds of vanity shall not cast thee down. Founded deep on that rock, thou mayest build day by day that tower whose top shall reach unto heaven, to the very presence of God, the sight of God, and shalt be able to finish it ; for He shall raise thee thither, who for thy sake abased Himself to us. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *The mind in Christ*.—The word mind generally denotes that power in man which conceives thought, weighs it, and forms conclusions. We speak of a "strong mind," a "disordered mind." Again, the word is used for the will-power, as when we say, "I have a mind to do it." At other times it is used for the heart or affections, *e.g.*, "A mind at rest," "A joy of mind," "A grief of mind." In the 7th of Romans it is used for the principle of grace in the heart. "But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind." Lastly, it is employed in a more comprehensive way, as in the text, where consecration of intellect, the aim of life, and temper of spirit are included. Christ Jesus is held up by the apostle as the model after which we should shape our lives. As good parents train their children by example, so God our Father trains His children. Christ the Lord is at first the pattern of heavenly life to us, but becomes more the power of heavenly life within us. Christ answers all the requirements of an example to us. We need for such—I. A BEING OF BOUNDLESS CAPACITY. The Bible represents Christ as God and Creator. Look to created things and see the power of His being. The drop of water has all the power and freshness which He gave it on the morning of creation. The effect cannot be greater than the cause. The sun shines with the same fulness of warmth and light and life as when it waked the first germ into life, yet it is but "the work of His fingers." But what are these as witnesses compared with the experiences of pure hearts who, in all generations, have been able to sing, "The Lord is my light and my salvation ?" II. ONE WHOSE NATURE IS LIKE OURS, AND IS AT THE SAME TIME ABOVE SIN. Look to the glory and yet the humanity of His nature. Earth did not, it could not, lift itself toward heaven. He became "Immanuel—God with us." "He took upon Him the form of a servant," &c. The prostrate vine cannot lift itself again to clasp the tree and climb among its branches ; but if the tree bow itself and unloose the tendrils from the roots and briers, the vine may find its place of rest and fruitfulness. This the tree cannot do ; but God in Christ has thus bowed Himself to fallen man. III. ONE WHO PRESENTS TO US FRESHNESS AND VARIETY OF MIND AND SOUL. We read, "Thou hast the dew of thy youth." "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Selecting as emblems those objects that are most expressive of life and beauty and blessing, the Saviour takes their name upon Himself. He is the

"Sun of Righteousness," "The Star out of Jacob," "The Morning Star," "The Light of the World." And then coming to things of earth—He is the sheep that is dumb before her shearers and is presently "the Good Shepherd." He is the "Lamb of God," &c. He is the "Fountain Opened," The "Tree of Life," "The Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley." In short, He is light for the eye, sound for the ear, bread for food, water for thirst, peace for the troubled, and rest for the weary. Over against every door of the mind and every window of the soul He stands laden with riches and waiting for admission. IV. WE NEED IN THE CULTURE OF THE MIND AND SOUL ONE WHO HAS SURPASSING WISDOM. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Conclusion: What are we to be like Him in? 1. In our aim in life. 2. In our spirit and temper. (*E. P. Ingersoll.*) *The mind in Christ*:—I. IN HIM. II. IN YOU. III. IN YOU BY HIS SPIRIT. IV. IN YOU AS A MEANS OF HAPPINESS AND SALVATION. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The mind that was in Christ Jesus*:—Was—I. SELF-ABNEGATING. If Christ, being God, for our sakes became man, may we not learn to forego, for the sake of each other, our own private advantages? 1. The rich may give to the poor, just as Christ for our sakes became poor. 2. The poor, themselves, should be helpful, just as Christ being poor was able to make many rich. II. CONDESCENDING. He stooped from highest glory to our low estate, thereby teaching those who have the advantage of ability and attainments to condescend to the ignorance and incapacity of their less favoured brethren. III. NON-COMPLAINING. Hence, the poor and ignorant should learn to cease from murmuring against those who have become better off by diligence, frugality, and sobriety, and to wear with cheerfulness the garb of poverty He wore, and receive with thankfulness the hardships He bore before them. IV. NON-CONTENTIOUS. All, whatever their condition, should learn to contend less for their own selves in the pursuit of this world's advantages, and leave more room for their neighbours' advancement and more cordially promote it. Industry is commendable, but grasping and jealousy are alien to the mind of Christ. We should let live as well as live. V. ABHORRENT OF SIN. So much so that He humbled Himself to the death of the cross to destroy it. The Christian, therefore, should mortify the affections of the flesh. VI. FEARLESS OF DEATH. He encountered it with joy that He might deliver us from bondage unto the fear of death. (*C. Girdlestone, M.A.*) Christ's was—I. A FEARLESS mind. He braved—1. Public opinion. 2. Persecution. 3. Death. II. A SELF-DENYING mind: and such in us will enable us, like Him, to forego—1. Present advantage for the good of others. 2. Popularity for the sake of principle. 3. Personal claims, profit and pleasure for usefulness. III. A LABORIOUS mind. Christ was ever thinking, planning, devising for others. IV. A BROADLY SYMPATHETIC mind. Helpfulness should be united with tenderness. V. A PATIENT mind. How He waited those thirty years; how He bore with the ignorance of His disciples, and the malignity of His murderers. VI. A HOPEFUL mind. He saw beyond the cross. "He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied." (*H. B. Ravensley.*) I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE MIND OF CHRIST? His view of things, and to have that mind is to think and feel about things as He did. He came down from heaven to study matters on the spot, and we can never have right views unless we take His point of view. But He came down not only to have right views but to rectify what was wrong. Hence, His standpoint was benevolent. He came not to judge but to save the world. II. WHAT WAS CHRIST'S MIND WHEN HE BECAME INCARNATE? 1. His view of man. This is seen sufficiently in the fact that He took man's nature. Creation gives us a high estimate of manhood. The Incarnation one far higher. God made it; God wore it. 2. His view of the soul. He thought it was worth shedding His blood for. How much are we willing to give to save a soul? We do so little because our estimate is so low. 3. His view of sin. He deemed it an evil so terrible that He must give His life to atone for it. Ought not this to produce in us a due sense of its enormity. 4. His view of the world and its glory. He treated the offer of Satan with contempt, and told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world. How contrary our own view. 5. His view of the use of time. "I must work the works of Him that sent me," &c. What a lesson to the indolent and procrastinating. 6. His view of the obligations of religion. In childhood, while obedient to His parents, He recognized a higher authority than theirs. "Wist ye not," &c. Later on, "If any man love father and mother more than Me." 7. His view of wealth and poverty—"The foxes have holes," &c. 8. His view of God's Word—"Man shall not live by bread alone." 9. His view in regard to His enemies—"Father, forgive them," is the practical commentary on "Love your enemies."

III. HOW ARE WE TO ATTAIN THIS MIND? 1. Only by union with Him through faith. 2. This mind is to be cultivated by a diligent study of His precepts and example with the help of His Spirit. (*J. W. Reeve, M.A.*) *The imitableness of Christ's character*:—1. That character as depicted by the evangelists is the perfection of beauty, and the more we contemplate it the stronger must be our convictions of the divinity of His religion. (1) The evangelists were incapable of inventing it. Their history, character, training, prevented that; and moreover, they present it artlessly, not as advocates, but as witnesses. (2) Believing, then, as we must, Christ as thus described by friends and foes alike, perfect and without sin, the religion He taught must be Divine. No bad man would originate a good cause, and no good man a bad one. 2. Christ's character is exhibited not for advocacy or admiration, but for imitation, and the best evidence of our interest in Him is our likeness to Him. Without this our religion is vain. The mind that was in Him, and is to be in us, was one of—I. EMINENT HUMILITY. Man fell by pride, and must be raised by humility. 1. Upon this Christ insisted. His first beatitude was on the poor in spirit. The condition of discipleship is to learn of Him who was "meek and lowly in heart." 2. Christ combined the highest displays of dignity with unaffected lowliness. 3. This humility was uniformly displayed in self-denial, forbearance, forgiveness, gentleness, patience, submission. II. SUBLIME BENEVOLENCE. This was exhibited—1. In the intense solicitude with which He regarded the interests of others; and if we would be conformed to the mind of Christ we must extirpate selfishness and live for the welfare of men. 2. In the work He undertook and the sacrifice He made. Some people manifest only feeling, but real charity like Christ's is always practical. 3. In the spirit and temper which marked all His procedure. It did not confine itself to occasional great efforts. III. SUPREME DEVOTION. If we want to know what the law of God requires we see it is Christ whose meat was to do God's will and to finish His work. This principle—1. Had all the constancy of influence on His mind in every transaction. It did not appear in peculiar forms or on special occasions. 2. It was manifested in the spirit of prayer. 3. It was marked by uniformity, and not by fits and starts. Conclusion: Various considerations to enforce the imitation of this bright example. 1. It was the great design of the Saviour to secure this conformity to the virtues of His life, even by His mediation. 2. It was His command to do as He had done. 3. There is not a doctrine or principle of our religion that does not lead to this and present a motive. 4. All the tendencies and affections of every renewed mind are in harmony with this important claim. 5. Heaven will be the perfection of this conformity. (*Joseph Fletcher, D.D.*) *The obedience of Christ*:—By having the mind of Christ is not meant doing exactly as He did, but having the disposition so that had we been in His circumstances we should have done what He did, and so acting in our circumstances as He would act were He in them. Here His obedience is set forth for our imitation. Notice that it was—I. VOLUNTARY, not forced or reluctant. "He made Himself," "He took," "He humbled Himself." 1. There was no compelling power in heaven, earth, or hell. 2. The inspiration of this obedience was love to God and man. 3. Human obedience to be of any value must be the free and joyful outcome of love. II. HUMILIATING. 1. Obedience is easy when the path is agreeable and the end profit or renown. In Christ's case the pathway was the manger and the wilderness, &c., and the goal the cross. 2. There was no species of humiliation, sin only excepted, which Christ did not endure. 3. This is the first step in true human obedience, for before that can be rendered, pride, self-seeking, self-importance, must be subdued. 4. This can only be effected by the religion of Jesus. II. PERSEVERING—"unto death." 1. The last term of our Lord's obedience was the hardest and worst. His other trials, heavy enough, were only preparatory. Our obedience will be worthless unless we endure to the end. "Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us, arm yourselves with the same mind." (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The Christian temper*:—I. HUMILITY. 1. This is important because it is the particular grace here inculcated, and is the root of all other graces. 2. Pride is natural to man and must be repressed in the believer by three considerations. (1) What he was—a sinner, enemy of God, heir of hell, &c. (2) What he is—a pardoned sinner, a child of God, but still imperfect, and with such weakness that he may well be humble (1 Tim. i. 15). (3) What he shall be—"like Christ;" what cause for humble gratitude. II. PIETY. 1. This was eminently seen in Christ. 2. The natural man is ungodly. 3. The spirit of piety will render those acts of religion natural and pleasant which are intolerably burdensome to the unconverted. III. SPIRITUALITY (John iii. 6). 1. We derive

our fleshly nature from our first parents. Natural men mind earthly things, while the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness unto them. 2. The believer, born from above, is spiritual, and minds heavenly things. 3. This constitutes the difference between the two, and determines the destiny of each (Rom. viii. 6). IV. CONTENTMENT (chap. iv. 11-13). This is—1. Generated by Divine grace. 2. Sustained by the Divine promises. V. MECKNESS (Matt. v. 5; 2 Cor. x. 1). This meekness is not the effect of constitution or the calculation of self-interest; it is the gift of God working on the lines of Christ's example. VI. MERCY (Heb. v. 2; Matt. v. 7; Rom. ix. 23; Col. iii. 12). 1. To the souls of men. 2. To their bodies. VII. SINCERITY. This is the soul of all religion (2 Cor. i. 12; John i. 48). Conclusion: 1. See how excellent is the religion of Jesus. 2. Learn the necessity of something more than morality. 3. How vain the profession of the gospel without its temper. 4. How far we come short of this example. (*G. Burder.*) *The problem of the age* (Prov. xxiii. 17 in connection with text):—Now, while Solomon lays down the broad general principles concerning the prime importance of one's theory of things, Paul, in this passage, gives a clear and terse expression to the Christian theory of human life, and urges its acceptance with the most intense earnestness—"Have this mind," &c. Christ Himself stands out as the embodiment of the Christian theory. I propose to show that this theory is unique and contrary to the popular view of this age in—I. ITS METHOD OF ESTIMATING THE VALUE OF MAN IN THIS WORLD. 1. It estimates him not by what is on him or around him or in his possession, but by what is in him. Be such in soul as Christ was. 2. I seriously question whether Christ, where He to appear as of old among men, would find many who would be willing to acknowledge themselves to be of His class in society. Would He have the shadow of a title to respectability in what the world is pleased to call the "best society." 3. It is hard to gain any adequate conception of how belittling and degrading such modern views are. But whether we are aware of it or not, society is suffering the disastrous consequences of this lowering of the estimate of character. We are coveting the same things that made wreck of the old nations, and forgetting the thing that has distinguished the Christian from them. The only possible remedy is to be found in making Christ's view our own, and shaping social life and intercourse according to that. "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus." II. The Christian theory of life is unique, and contrary to the popular theory of this age in THE SUPREME END THAT IT PROPOSES FOR HUMAN CONDUCT. That end is absolute righteousness in conformity to the will of God. There is no escaping the fact that Christ exalted righteousness as the governing principle of the universe. Now there are two radically variant views concerning the supreme end of human conduct—that which finds it in God, and that which finds it in man. The latter is the outcome of our depraved nature. It may be traced along the line of heathen and materialistic thought from Epicurus to Herbert Spencer and Paul Janet. In its grosser form it makes the quest for happiness the supreme thing for man. Its positive rule is, "Enjoy yourself;" its negative, "Don't get hurt." You cannot make men of breadth and stature on that basis. The view dwarfs and deadens humanity. The antagonistic view of Christianity finds the supreme end of human conduct and activity in connection with God. Virtue is righteousness, conformity to the law of the moral Governor. And yet, is it not true that, as we throw away Christ's standard of manhood—character—we also cast aside His theory of the supreme rule of human conduct? Nay, does not the fact that we have repudiated that rule account for our present view of character? Does not the average man oftener ask the question, Will this make me comfortable? Will this secure my happiness? or, Will this increase my fortune? or, Will this enlarge my knowledge or culture? than the question, Is this right? It is this selfish, so-called morality that has brought the degradation of character, the general corruption. III. The Christian theory is unique and contrary to the popular theory in THE LAW WHICH IT PROPOSES FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF THE HIGHEST SUCCESS IN HUMAN LIFE—the law of self-sacrifice. Man is born into the world the most helpless of animals, and, what is more, the most selfish of all animals. The problem of human life, for the parent, human and divine, is how to develop the generous manhood and womanhood out of this interest of all animalism. Just here it is that man is most fearfully made. He can only gain by renouncing. He seeks for himself and his own selfish aims only, at the peril of missing all. The law of the gospel is, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," &c. Seek other things first, and you lose them all. "He that loseth his life shall find it," &c. If the wretched and unsuccessful man

will look into his heart he will find that he is breaking this great law of life, and is suffering for his breach of it. He is making too much of self, possessions, success, and is thereby forfeiting the very things he desires most. The human disappointment and unrest will continue with the resultant envy and strife until Christ's law of self-sacrifice is accepted. With the mind that was in Christ Jesus, we shall find the true solution of the dark problem that has led so many into pessimism. IV. The Christian theory is unique in the kind of life that it proposes to man for the satisfaction of his active nature: a life devoted to the glory of God in redemption. This was the supreme thing in the life of Christ. For this He obeyed, suffered, and died. On the ground of this God has highly exalted Him. And so in the gospel view, the work for which man is in the world. We have had our popular theories of moral reform without Christ; but if anything has been demonstrated by human history, the only universal and effective method of such reform is that which starts out from Christ and His gospel. When, and only when, you make the drunkard a real Christian, you make sure that he will be a temperate man. We have had our popular theories of education without Christ, but nothing now seems more certain than that they practically end in corruption and crime. We devote our powers with tremendous energy to the production and acquisition of wealth and the advancement of material civilization, with the inevitable result of overproduction and periodical depression, in which much of the fancied gain disappears. If one-half the energy were expended in the higher line of gospel effort we might have steady increase of solid wealth with permanent prosperity, and all this in a world of constantly increasing purity and peace. Living on such principles our souls might grow as rapidly as our fortunes, instead of being blighted and dwarfed by covetousness. (*Pres. D. S. Gregory.*) *Paul's method of exhortation* :—Just as some orator, skilfully addressing a company of soldiers on the eve of battle, begins with admonition and ends with a picture; just as he would appeal to their manhood, their consistency, their honour, and their courage, as he would play upon their fear of disgrace and their contempt of poltroonery; just as he would follow up each motive with another and a more elevated one, until, at the last, he would invoke their patriotism and their love for their leader, alike and together, by unfurling the national ensign and showing them how he had caused to be painted across the folds the likeness of the face they knew; so here the apostle seeks to arouse Christian enthusiasm by quickly exhibiting the very image of the Captain of our salvation, and bidding us follow Him alone. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*)

Vers. 6-10. Who being in the form of God.—*The three estates* :—The apostle evidently points out the three different conditions of Christ. His state of—1. Dignity. 2. Humility. 3. Glory. These three are essential to the argument, for take away any of them and the example he proposes is lost. I. If you remove the state of Christ's natural dignity the second state will no longer be that of humiliation, nor Christ any longer an example of humility. II. It is implied that He was in possession of whatever belonged to His state of dignity before He underwent anything that belonged to His state of humiliation. He was in the form of God, before He was made in the likeness of men. III. It is implied that He underwent whatever belonged to His state of humiliation before He enjoyed anything that belonged to His state of exaltation; because His exaltation was the effect and reward of His humility, and being purchased and obtained by His humility could not be antecedent to it. From whence it follows, that the form of God, being the dignity He possessed before His humiliation, does not belong to Him in virtue of anything He did or suffered, nor is any part of that glory to which He was exalted after or on account of His sufferings. To maintain otherwise is to confound the distinct states of glory which belong to Christ: the glory He had with the Father before the world was, and the glory which He received from the Father at the redemption: one the glory of nature, the other the glory of office; one the glory of the eternal Logos, the other the glory of the Son of Man. These are carefully distinguished elsewhere. 1. We find the original glory founded upon creation (Col. i. 15-17), and in the next verse the apostle mentions a honour belonging to Christ's exaltation founded on His resurrection. As Lord of all, He is styled the firstborn of every creature; as Head of the Church, the firstborn from the dead. 2. To raise the dead is a power equivalent to creation, and therefore St. John tells us, "The hour is coming," &c. (chap. v. 25). In ver. 27, however, speaking of His being Judge of the world which belongs to Him in virtue of Redemption, lies one of the glories of His exaltation. He says, "The Father,"

Ac. 3. In Heb. i. 1-2 the apostle describes the dignity of the Person sent for our redemption, and evidently describes Christ's original glory. Then follows, "When He had purged our sins," &c., which speaks of His state of exaltation which He received after His sufferings. And in chap. ii. 9, it is said that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels, but here, "better." If He was made lower in order to redeem us, it seems to imply that He was really, and by nature, higher. We may expound Hebrews by Philippians. For when He, who was in the form of God, made Himself of no reputation, He was made lower than the angels; but when, after His suffering death, He was exalted by God then He was made so much better than the angels, as He had by inheritance a more excellent name than they (Cf. ver. 9-10). (*T. Sherlock, D.D.*) *The form of God*:—To be in the form of God signifies not only to be King, to possess majesty and power, but also to have the insignia of royalty, its courtly train and equipage. Thus formerly among the Romans we might call the form of a consul, the equipage and pomp with which the laws and customs of that people invested those who exercised the office; the purple, the ivory chair, the twelve lictors with their fasces and rods, and such-like. When, then, the apostle here says that the Lord, before taking our nature upon Him, was in the form of God, he does not merely intend that He was God in Himself, and that He had the true nature of the divinity; but, further still, that He possessed the glory and enjoyed all the dignity, majesty, and grandeur due to so high a name. This is precisely what our Lord means in St. John by the glory which He says He had with the Father before the world was. (*J. Dailé.*)

Ver. 7. But made Himself of no reputation.—*The humiliation of Christ*:—**L. HOW FAR CHRIST WAS LESSENERED.** 1. His Godhead was obscured by the interposing veil of our flesh. He emptied Himself of the Divine glory, not by ceasing to be what He was, but by assuming something He was not before. 2. His dignity was lessened. It was a condescension of God to take notice of man's misery (Psa. cxiii. 6), much more to take part in it. Three steps in this condescension may be noted. (1) He who thought it no robbery to be equal with God is made less than God (John xiv. 28), as Mediator. (2) He was not only lesser than God, but lesser than the angels (Heb. ii. 7). (3) In the human nature He was depressed beyond the ordinary condition of man (Psa. xxii. 6; Isa. liii. 3; Mark ix. 12). Born of a poor virgin, His cradle a manger, &c., lived a life of poverty, &c. **II. THIS WAS HIS OWN VOLUNTARY ACT.** This is in no way inconsistent with the action of the Father in sending Him. 1. What He was to do and undergo was proposed to Him and willingly accepted (Heb. x. 6-7; Isa. vii. 5; Prov. viii. 31). 2. The Scripture assigneth this work to the love and condescension of Christ Himself as the immediate cause of His performance of it (Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 25-26; Rev. i. 5-6; 2 Cor. viii. 9). **III. THIS WORK WAS FOR OUR SAKES.** 1. As our Mediator. (1) He emptied Himself that we might be filled with all grace. (2) He was born of a woman that we might be born of God (Gal. iv. 4-5). (3) He was made a curse that we might have a blessing (Gal. iii. 13-14). (4) He was made poor for us that by His poverty we might be made rich (2 Cor. viii. 9). (5) There are some things in the mediation of Christ which belong to ministry and others to authority. Those which belong to ministry as to be in servant's form, and to die; he must be a man for that. Those which belong to authority as to bring us to God convey to us the spirit; and He must be God for that. 2. As our pattern (ver. 5). (1) The power of Christ's example is general. (a) It is perfect, for His life is religion exemplified, a visible commentary on God's Word. (b) Engaging. Christ's submission to a duty should make it engaging to us (John xiii. 14; 1 John ii. 6). Alexander the Great achieved most of his exploits by his example. When hard beset, he would make the first in every action. (c) Effectual (2 Cor. iii. 18). (d) Encouraging (Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15). (e) An armour of proof against all temptations (ver. 5; 1 Pet. iv. i). (2) What He teacheth us by making Himself of no reputation. (a) Patience under indignities undergone for God's sake (1 Pet. ii. 21; Heb. xii. 2). Consider if Christ had been unwilling to suffer for us what had been our condition to all eternity! We cannot lose so much for Him as He hath for us (2 Cor. viii. 9). We are gainers by Him if we love the world for His sake (Matt. x. 29-30.) (b) Humility. We are far inferior to Christ, and shall we stand so much on our reputation (Matt. xi. 29, xx. 28; John xiii. 3). (c) More exact obedience (ver. 8; Heb. v. 8-9). (d) Self-denial (Rom. xv. 3; John xii. 27-28; chap. i. 20). (e) Contempt of the world and the glory thereof. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) Took upon Him the form of a servant.—*The mystery of Christ in the form of a servant*:—Christ is expressly

called God's servant (Isa. xlii. 1 ; cf. Matt. xii. 18), and "bondservant" (Psa. xl. 6 ; cf. Exod. xxi. 6). I. To whom He became a servant. To man's great Lord and Master (Isa. xlix. 3). It was with His Father He entered into the contract of service (Psa. xl. 6). It was His Father's business He was employed in (Luke ii. 49 ; John ix. 4). II. For whom He became a servant. For and instead of those who were bound to service, but utterly unable for it. III. THE NECESSITY OF HIS becoming a servant for us for our salvation. 1. Mankind were constituted God's hired servants by the first covenant, viz., of works, and extend to that in their head the first Adam. Their work was perfect obedience to the holy law ; their hire was life (Rom. x. 1). The penalty of breaking away from their Master was perpetual bondage under the curse (Gal. iii. 10). 2. They never made out their service. Through the solicitation of the great runaway servant, the devil, they violated the covenant, and broke away from their Master. So they lost all plea for the hire, and justly became bondmen under the curse of the broken covenant of works (Gal. iv. 24). Their falling under this curse inferred the loss of their liberty, and constituted them bondmen (Gen. ix. 25 ; Josh. ix. 23). 3. By the breaking of that covenant they lost all their ability for their service, and were left without strength (Rom. v. 6). They had no suffering strength to bear their punishment, and so must have perished under it. They had no working strength, for their work-arm, once sufficient, was broken ; nay, they had neither hand nor heart for their work again (Rom. viii. 7 ; Josh. xxiv. 19). 4. Howbeit the punishment due to them behoved to be borne, and the service to be made out according to the original contract, the covenant of works ; or else they could never have life and salvation (Gen. ii. 7 ; Isa. xlii. 21 ; Gen. xxviii. 15). 5. Since all this behoved to be done, and they could not do it, it was necessary for their life and salvation that Christ should come under the curse for them, accept their service, and fully serve it out for them (Gal. iii. 3-5, 13). IV. THE CONTRACT OF THE SERVICE—the covenant of grace made between the Father and Christ. Heaven's device in this case was that Christ should be the worker for life and salvation to poor sinners ; and that they should get life and salvation, through Him, by His grace, and so work from life and salvation received, as sons entitled to the inheritance antecedently to all their working (Rom. vi. 23 ; iv. 4, 5). Here consider—(1) The contract was entered into from eternity (Tit. i. 2). (2) Its design was—(a) To illustrate the Divine glory much darkened by the hired servants of God's own house by sin (Isa. xlix. 3). (b) To save lost sinners (Isa. xlix. 6). (3) The service which in this contract He undertook to perform was to fulfil the whole law for them (Heb. x. 9). (4) The covenanted reward of the service was a glorious exaltation to Himself, and eternal life for them (ver. 9 ; Tit. i. 2). V. THE FULFILLING OF THE SERVICE according to the contract. It was a hard service, but He went through with it (ver. 8). 1. He entered into this service by His being born holy for us, and remained so to the end. Thus He answered the demand which the law had upon them for original holiness as a condition of life (Isa. ix. 6 ; Luke i. 35). 2. He went on in His service in the righteousness of His life, being obedient unto death (ver. 8 ; John xvi. 4). 3. Having suffered all His life long, He completed and finished His service in His death and burial ; thus answering for them the law's demand of satisfaction for sin (John xix. 30). The term of His continuance in this state of servitude was, according to the covenant, till death, but no longer (John ix. 4 ; Job iii. 19 ; Rom. iv. 9). VI. WHEREFORE HE ENGAGED IN THIS SERVICE. 1. Love to God and man (Exod. xxi. 5). 2. He took it on Him for releasing us from that state of bondage into which our father Adam, by his mismanagement, had brought all mankind. What Judah offered to do in the case of Benjamin (Gen. xlv. 33), Christ really performed in the case of His brethren. 3. To bring them into a state of adoption in the family of God. He became a bondservant that they might become sons and daughters (Gal. iv. 1-5). VII. THE USE. 1. To all strangers to Jesus Christ : ye are bondmen under the law, and so—(1) It lies upon you to fulfil the service to which man was bound by the covenant of works, viz., perfect obedience under the pain of the curse (Rom. iii. 19). As you are unable for this you can never be saved while out of Christ. 2. It lies upon you to bear the punishment due to you for breaking away from your Lord and Master (Gen. ii. 17). 2. Let all be exhorted to flee to Christ, and by faith embrace Him, and the service performed by Him as their only plea for life and salvation. Surely it will be glad tidings to the poor broken-hearted sinner, who sees that he cannot serve the Lord according to the demand of the law, to know that there is a service performed by the Mediator for him which is perfect in the eye of the law, and that a way of reconciliation is opened. VIII. IMPROVEMENT.

1. If you have any part or lot in this matter of Christ's service, let it be the business of your life to serve the Lord Christ. Consider—(1) He was in the form of God who served for you, and delivered you from the worst of masters. (2) He has no need of your service, but ye were in absolute need of His service for you. (3) The service He rendered you was hard service; the yoke He puts upon you is easy, and the burden light. (4) Christ fulfilled all righteousness for you to the end that you might serve Him in holiness and righteousness. (5) Christ served you ungrudgingly, do not grudge what you give or do for Him. (6) As Christ was highly exalted after His service so will you be after yours. Be faithful therefore. 2. Redeemed by Christ. (1) In what spirit are we to serve Him. (a) Not as slaves, but as children (Gal. iv. 7). This is the only acceptable service. (b) Out of love for Him (Heb. vi. 10; 2 Cor. v. 14; 2 Tim. i. 7). (c) Universally (Col. iv. 12). (d) Constantly (Psa. cxix. 112). (2) How are we to serve Him. (a) By being of a loving disposition towards our brethren. (b) By doing good as we have opportunity (Gal. vi. 10). (c) Put on bowels of mercies towards those who are in distress (Col. iii. 12). (d) Show a strict regard for justice in your dealings with men as Christ did in His dealings towards God for you. (e) Be humble (John xiii. 14-15). (T. Boston, D.D.)

Christ a slave.—The word "servant" does not convey to us the degree of degradation which it meant centuries ago. For service has been dignified since Christ was a servant. We know nothing now more honourable than Christian service. But He first taught us to call our servants "friends." 1. Look at SOME OF THE LAWS RESPECTING JEWISH SLAVES so as to estimate the humiliation of Jesus; and these were mild compared with those that obtained among the Romans. 1. No slave could have any right as a citizen. If injured he had no redress. As for our Saviour, when subjected to the most outrageous wrong, no arm of the law was outstretched for His defence. "His judgment was taken away." 2. The slave could hold no property. The Servant of servants had not where to lay His head; no money to pay His taxes; no clothes but such as privileged hands had made for Him. 3. The slave, in the eye of the law, was a mere chattel, which could be bought and sold; for the base sum of less than three pounds Judas sold his Lord. 4. At death the slave might be scourged and tortured as none other might, and the bitterest and vilest death was assigned to Him. See Jesus under the lash and on the cross the slave. 5. The law said the slave was nothing less than a dead man; Christ was "a worm and no man." II. AS A SLAVE CHRIST HAD TWO DUTIES TO EXECUTE. 1. To His Father. (1) God had made the power of Jesus to do His work depend on His faithfulness. "By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." Had He not been righteous as a servant, He could not have justified the sinner. (2) But how perfect was His course of servitude, how continuous, laborious, devoted (Psa. xl.; cf. Heb. x). The Jewish slave wishing, for the love he bore his master, to continue in his service, had his ear fastened for a while with an awl to his master's door in token of his abiding always in his service. So Christ, in the language of the slave, loves to say, "Mine ears hast Thou opened," and adds the reason, "I delight," &c. 2. To His people. His time while He lived on earth was not His own but theirs. He was at every one's call. His day was all work for the creature; His night communion with the Creator. The smallest things were not beneath His attention (John xiii.). III. INFERENCES. 1. Of all the names a Christian can wear there is not one which places him so near his Master as this—a servant of God. St. Paul put it above his apostleship. 2. To own that title you must not regard it as a figure of speech. (1) Your time is not your own. (2) Your possessions—money, talents, power. (3) Be clothed therefore with humility, and gird yourself with energy. (J. Vaughan, M.A.)

Made in the likeness of men.—*Christ a man.*—1. As soon as the Saviour had resolved to take upon Him the form of a servant, it followed that He should be "made in the likeness of men." Fallen man is the most servile thing in God's universe—a bond-slave of Satan, "Sold under sin"—the servant of uncleanness. His passions are his masters, his fears his chains, death his cruel tyrant. 2. We must be careful not to suffer our conviction of the Deity of Christ to weaken our apprehension of His perfect manhood. For if Christ be not absolutely a man, if His divinity come in, in the least degree, to qualify His humanity, then He practically ceases to be an example, and, indeed, a substitute. I. IT WAS NOT THE BODY OF CHRIST ONLY WHICH WAS HUMAN WHILE HIS SOUL WAS DIVINE, BUT THAT SOUL AND BODY WERE EQUALLY IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN. 1. His bodily presence stood forth always visibly and palpably a man. In the likeness of the infant He lay in the manger, of the boy He sat in the temple, of the man He walked the length and breadth of the land. The labouring man has

the privilege of resemblance, for it is not unlikely that He worked at His father's trade. Rest and clothes and food and warmth He needed like us. 2. Let us trace on the likeness into His spiritual being. (1) It is a law of the mind that it grows. Jesus "grew in wisdom." (2) That we are conscious of joy and sorrow. Once Christ rejoiced in Spirit, and twice shed tears. (3) That we must lean on some one, our God and our friend. So did Jesus. (4) That we should be tempted. He imitated us in His conflict with the prince of darkness. (5) In deep thoughts he had the counterpart of ours, the shrinking back of the obedient and willing spirit as it recoils from nature's throes. (6) He was utterly blameless; yet He knew sin by experience, for He bore it. II. THE MANHOOD CHRIST ASSUMED IS FULL OF THE DEEPEST COMFORT TO HIS CHURCH. 1. All the nature of our race was gathered and concentrated into that one human life. He stood forth as the great representative man. 2. Thus it was that Christ went down to His grave, and when He rose and was glorified the great representative principle went on. He is not the solitary conqueror entered into His rest; but the forerunner and earnest of His saints. He holds ground for us till, in due time, we shall come. 3. And so long as the needful processes of the preparation go on He there lives, and intercedes, and rules, and wears the very form in which He suffered. How certain, then, His sympathy. III. THEREFORE REVERENCE MANHOOD. Respect a body which has such fellowships; be tender to the corporeal wants of the members of the body of Christ. (*Ibid.*) *The humiliation of Christ*:—I. IN HIS INCARNATION. The Ruler of all brought to the state of a creature. 1. To the state of an inferior creature, a man, not an angel. 2. At a time when this nature was stained by sin. 3. To be scorned by men. 4. Deprived of the joys of heaven. 5. The offspring of a poor woman. II. IN HIS LIFE. 1. Born in a stable. 2. Tempted of Satan. 3. Inured to poverty. 4. Ungratefully received by His own and by the world. III. IN HIS DEATH—that of a malefactor. (*J. Flavel.*) *The possibility of Christ's humiliation*:—We have no difficulty in conceiving how a man of highest virtue, and noblest birth, and clearest intelligence, could assume an outward garb which would completely belie or hide his real character. A king need not always wear the royal robes and sit on a throne. He may become a shepherd on the hill, a sailor before the mast, a servant of his own servants. Missionaries—and in this case the moral analogy is more perfect—after learning the language of a barbarous people, have gone among them, conforming to all their habits as far as they could, living a dark, rude life, submitting to every kind of trial and privation, in order to a great and beneficent end. Is it then to be said, in the ignorance of our pride, in the supercilious presumption of our poor narrow thought, that the Infinite One must always be in Divine state and glory, in one manifestation, in one form of His infinite life, that whatever transpires in the history of the world or the universe, He can do nothing except what He has been for ever doing—speak no new word—make no new revelation of Himself? The assertion that God cannot lay aside some of what we may call the accidents of His being, and invest Himself in another way, is almost to assert that He is not God at all. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) "*Emptied Himself*":—All His attributes He veiled and hid; His infinity, to abide, like other unborn babes, within the virgin's womb; His eternity, to receive birth in time, younger than His creatures; His unchangeableness, to grow in stature, and (as it would seem) for His earthly form to decay, and be worn by His sufferings; His wisdom, "for our sake and among us to be ignorant, as man," "of that which, as Lord, He knew"; His self-sufficiency, that He, who had all things, became as though He had nothing. He forewent not things without Him only; He forewent Himself. He, the Creator, not only made Himself to need the creatures which He had formed, and was without them—He was hungry and thirsty, and wearied—but even in the things which He wrought, He depended not alone on the Godhead within Him but on the Father. His works were not His own works but His Father's. He came not to do His own will, but His Father's. He prayed, and praying was heard, though He Himself was God. He was strengthened as man, by the angel, whom, as God, He created. Again, how must He have "*emptied Himself*" of His majesty, who, when, with a word, He could have destroyed the ungodly, and "with the breath of His mouth" have "*slain the wicked*," was Himself sold into their hands for the price of a bondslave. He "*hid not His face from shame and spitting*," before whom angels veil their faces. He "*emptied Himself*" of His immortality, and the immortal died. He became subject to death, the penalty of sin. But what seems yet more amazing, He was content to veil even that, in Himself, wherein, so to say, God is most God, the glory of the divinity, His holy being,

whereby He hateth all iniquity. He who is "the Truth," was contented to be called "that deceiver." He hid His holiness, so that His apostate angel shrank not from approaching Him, to tempt Him. He veiled the very humility wherewith He humbled Himself to be obedient, so that Satan thought that He might be tempted through pride. He was content to be thought able to covet the creatures which He had made, and, like us, to prefer them to the Father; yea, and the very lowest of the creatures, which even man can despise. They called Him "a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber." "We know," say they, "that this man is a sinner." They reproached Him for disobedience to the Father, and breaking the law which He gave. So wholly was He made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, that man could not discern that He, the holy God, was not (shocking to say) unholy man. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*)

Condescension of Christ:—During one of the campaigns in the American Civil War, when the winter weather was very severe, some of Stonewall Jackson's men having crawled out in the morning from their snow-laden blankets, half-frozen, began to curse him as the cause of their sufferings. He lay close by under a tree, also snowed under, and heard all this: but, without noticing it, presently crawled out too, and, shaking off the snow, made some jocular remark to the nearest men, who had no idea he had ridden up in the night and lain down amongst them! The incident ran through the army in a few hours, and reconciled his followers to all the hardships of the expedition, and fully re-established his popularity. (*M. O. Mackay.*)

The humanity of Christ:—From eternity there was the idea and image of a man in the mind of God. That man was perfect. Adam was created in his innocence a type or shadow of that man. When Adam lost the likeness, the great design of God was to restore it. To this end, Christ, who was always the real original of that man as he lay in the purposes of God, determined to take our nature. From time to time, in earnest of His future purpose, He appeared as a man to the Old Testament saints. At last, when the appointed period arrived, Christ "came after the flesh, born of a woman." He was not at first that perfect man which lay in the intention of the Father before all ages, but He was like it, as the shadow is to the substance; and He gradually grew into it. By successive processes He attained it. First, He was natural; then, after His resurrection, He was spiritual; then, after His ascension, He was glorious; and now, still a man, entirely a man, wearing our framework, and carrying our affections, He is that very eternal man conceived in the bosom of God, and of which both Adam in Paradise and He in Bethlehem were made to be the copy and the likeness. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

And being found in fashion as a man.—The Saviour's fashion:—I. THE FASHION IN WHICH CHRIST WAS FOUND—that of a man. 1. Real, not in appearance only. 2. Perfect, both body and soul, with all the attributes of our humanity. 3. Sinless. It was needful for Him to assume this fashion. (1) Otherwise our sins could not be atoned for. (2) Nor could He have become the Head of the Church. It is impossible to admire this fashion too much. II. WHAT HE ENDURED IN THAT FASHION. 1. He humbled Himself to teach us the sin and folly of pride and the duty of humility. 2. He became obedient to teach us passive and active obedience to God's will. (1) This obedience was perfect—"to death." (2) Acceptable. (3) He endured the cross to teach us self-denial. III. THE PERMANENCE OF THAT FASHION. Other fashions change. This never. He wears the body that will be His through eternity. Conclusion: 1. This is the only fashion in which salvation can be found. 2. This is the only pattern for our holiness. (*J. Irons.*)

Christ degraded:—1. The expressions which assert Christ's incarnation imply His Deity. Who would say of any merely human being that he was "found in fashion as a man." 2. Christ might have been man without humiliation: e.g., had He assumed the "glorious body" He now wears. 3. The most beautiful feature about Christ's humiliation was that it was never prominent, but always self-forgetful. The grace of a humble mind is that it is too humble to look humble. Our Lord's humiliation may be regarded in four stages. I. IN HIS INCARNATION. How imperceptible that was. No parade. Never did infant enter life with less consequence. II. IN HIS PRE-MINISTERIAL LIFE. 1. There was the humiliation of the flight and exile into Egypt. 2. His choice of Nazareth as a home, the name of which fastened a stigma and a prejudice upon Him all His days. 3. His life of subjection and labour. III. IN HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY. 1. His submission to baptism. John was struck with the self-abasement of this act. Ordinances, however precious, are humbling because the badge of a fallen state. 2. His temptation. There are things we come in contact with which, though not hurtful, leave a feeling of debasement. 3. His poverty and

privation. 4. His intercourse with the coarse and the sinful. 4. His subjection to the cavil of the unbeliever, and the jest of the profane. IV. In His DEATH. 1. The circumstances of His arrest and trial. 2. The character of His punishment. 3. His dissolution. It was humiliation indeed for God to become man; much more, being man, to die. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The humiliation of Christ.*—In the text we have—1. The depth of Christ's humiliation. (1) Specified—"death." (2) Aggravated—"death of the cross." 2. The manner thereof. (1) Voluntary—"humbled Himself." (2) "Obedient." The Scripture marks the special stages of His humiliation. 1. He stooped to become a man. Had Christ been made an angel it had been infinitely below Himself. 2. He condescended to put His neck under the yoke of the law. (Gal. iv. 4). A creature is indispensably subjected to the law of its Maker, by virtue of its creatureship and dependence, and is involved in no humiliation. But the Son of God is the Law Maker. He submitted to the ceremonial law in His circumcision, and to the moral law in His life; all which subjection was not a debt to God, but a voluntary subscription. "The law is not made," in some sense, "for a righteous man" (1 Tim. i. 9), but is not made in any sense for the glorious God. 3. He appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. viii. 3). He trod not one step awry in sin, but many of the footsteps of sin appeared upon Him: e.g.—(1) Poverty. Sin was the great bankrupt that brought all to beggary, and so poverty is the likeness of sin. (2) Sorrow (Isa. liii. 3). The same Hebrew word stands for both. (3) Shame and reproach. Sin was the inlet of shame (Gen. iii. 7). So Christ (Isa. liii. 3; Psal. xxvii. 6). (4) The withdrawal of the Father and clouding the light of His countenance (Matt. xxvii. 46, cf. Isa. lix. 2). (4) Death. In amplification of this, the principal act of Christ's humiliation, note—**I. WHAT KIND OF DEATH CHRIST HUMLED HIMSELF UNTO.** Not a natural death, nor a mere violent death, but a violent death having three embittering circumstances. 1. Pain. The easiest death is painful, however downy the bed. The first mention of Christ's death is that of bruising (Gen. iii. 15; Isa. liii. 10). So painful was it in thought that Christ shrunk from it (Matt. xxvi. 39). Three things made the actual death painful. (1) The piercing His hands and feet, those sinews and sensitive parts. (2) The extension and distortion of His body. (3) The slowness and gradual approach of death. Six complete hours in the heat of the day was Christ in dying (Mark xv. 25; cf. ver. 34). 2. Shame. There is nothing so sharp and intolerable, not even pain, to a noble spirit as shame (Heb. xii. 2). The cross was an ignominious death, and Christ endured it amidst circumstances of aggravated ignominy, nakedness, and scorn. All his offices were derided: His Priestly (Matt. xxvii. 42); His prophetic (Luke xxii. 64); His Kingly (John xix. 2-3). Notorious villains were crucified with Him. He suffered without the gate (Heb. xii. 12; Levit. xxiv. 14). 3. Curse. Pain was bad, shame worse, curse worst of all (Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13; Acts v. 30). **II. IN WHAT MANNER CHRIST UNDERWENT THIS DEATH.** 1. Willingly. His sacrifice was a free-will offering. Neither the Father's ordination nor men's violence constituted the sacrifice (Psal. xl. 7-8; John x. 17-18). He might have avoided it (Matt. xxvi. 53), but so far from that He anticipated His executioners (John xix. 33). But He was more than willing (Luke xii. 50). 2. Obediently. It was His will to die; and yet He died not of His own will, but of His Father's. The two are conjoined in Heb. x. 7, and John x. 18. This obedience was the best part of His sacrifice (1 Sam. xv. 22; Matt. xxvi. 39). 3. Humbly and meekly.—(Isa. liii. 7)—from His expostulation with Judas (Matt. xxvi. 50) to His last prayer (Luke xxiii. 34) all is that of One who, when He suffered He threatened not (1 Pet. ii. 23). **III. UPON WHAT GROUNDS CHRIST THUS HUMLED HIMSELF TO DEATH.** 1. That Scripture prophecies might be accomplished (Isa. lixiii. 1; Gen. iii. 15; Luke xxiv. 25, 26). 2. That Scripture types might be fulfilled—Isaac, the offerings, the brazen serpent, &c. 3. That His will and testament might be firm and effectual (Heb. ix. 16, 17; Luke xxii. 20). 4. That justice might be satisfied (Heb. ix. 22, Rom. iii. 25, 26). 5. That He that hath the power of death might be destroyed (Heb. ii. 14). 6. To take away the meritorious cause of death, namely, sin (Rom. viii. 3; vi. 10-11; Dan. ix. 24-26). Application: Three uses may be made of this doctrine. 1. For information. (1) This lets us see the transcendent and inexpressible love of Christ to poor sinners (Gal. ii. 20). (2) The horrible and cursed evil of sin to need such a remedy. (3) The exact and impartial justice of God and His most righteous remedy against sin. Rather than that sin should go unpunished He spared not His own Son (Rom. iii. 25). (4) This is sad and dreadful news to all impenitent sinners (Heb. x. 29). 2. For exhortation. If Christ shed His blood for sin (1) let us shed

the blood of sin (Rom. vi. 10, 11; Gal. v. 24). (2) Let our lives run out for Christ in a vigorous activity (2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Titus ii. 14). (3) Let us praise Him exceedingly, and raise Him in our esteem above everything and every one else (1 Pet. ii. 7; 1 Cor. ii. 2; Phil. iii. 8; Matt. x. 37). (4) Let us prize highly our own souls that were purchased at such a price (1 Pet. i. 18). (5) Let us be willing, if need be, to shed our blood for Him (Acts xx. 24; Rev. xii. 11; Heb. xii. 4). (6) By faith and hearty acceptance of Christ, let us put in for a share of, and get an interest in Christ's blood (Rom. iii. 25; Heb. ix. 14). 3. For comfort. (1) Your enemies are foiled. The justice of God is satisfied; the law is fulfilled; Satan is subdued; sin is abolished as it binds over to punishment, and is reflected in the conscience by way of accusation; death is slain. (2) Your person is accepted. (3) Christ is willing to do anything for thee. (4) Heaven is opened to thee (Heb. x. 19). (*J. Meriton, D.D.*) *The obedience of Christ*.—I. ITS CHARACTERISTICS. 1. Produced by the Spirit. He was tempted and overcame by the Holy Ghost. 2. Perfectly human, or it would be no example to us. 3. Progressive. "Though He were a Son," &c. It grew with the growth of obligations. 4. Active and passive. II. ITS NATURE. 1. He obeyed the law. "Thy law is within my heart" was the language of His whole life. (1) As an antitype He fulfilled the whole law of sacrifice. (2) As a devout Jew, He fulfilled the whole ceremonial law. (3) As a citizen of the world He fulfilled the political law by paying taxes. (4) As a man He fulfilled the whole moral law. (5) As a child of God He fulfilled the spiritual law. 2. Christ was always obeying inward principle. His outward life was the reflection of His sense of duty. How often was "I must" upon His lips. 3. Christ always set His life to the meridian of Scripture—"It is written." 4. He was the most obedient of Sons to His heavenly Father—"I can of Myself do nothing." III. THE HARMONIOUS ADJUSTMENT OF ITS TWOFOLD OBLIGATIONS. 1. As a child He was subject to His mother—but if interfered with in His work there were the "Woman; what have I to do with thee?" or "Who is My mother?" 2. As a subject of the state He pays the tribute at the same moment that He asserts His claim and privilege as the Son of God. "Render unto Cæsar," &c. IV. ITS DEVELOPMENT. 1. As an infant He was obedient to circumcision. 2. His childhood and early manhood were subject to parental authority. 3. At thirty His argument for baptism is "Thus it becometh us," &c. 4. In obedience to the Holy Ghost He goes into the desert and conquers by "It is written," &c. 5. The yoke He imposes on His disciples is His own—obedience. 6. He is Lord of the Sabbath, but obeys the Sabbath. 7. The Transfiguration speaks of Sonship and service. 8. His death was the completion of His life of obedience. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Obedient unto death*.—The phrase states the landing-place of Christ's career of humiliation, the antipodes of the contrast, the nadir below which it was impossible for Him to go. I. WHAT IS DEATH—especially as expressive of the condition to which Jesus humbled Himself? Our modern conception of death has been so illumined by the doctrine of Christian immortality that we are inclined to conceive of the death of Christ simply as an analogue of ours. But death, in the person of Jesus, was the culminating catastrophe in the history of the "Man of sorrows." To us death is the chalice whose poison has been changed by the chemistry of redeeming love into nectar; to Jesus it was a cup full of the concentrated dregs of woe. To us it is a shaft whose sting has been removed; to Him it was an arrow envenomed by the wrath of God against sin. To us it is a victory over the last and mightiest form of evil; to Him it was a surrender to the masterful forces of disorganization and ruin. To us it is an introduction into the presence and companionship of God; to Him it was an abandonment into darkness unrelieved by a ray of Divine light, and whose solitude was unblest by a whisper of Divine love. The Atonement was no compromise between the demands of justice and the pleadings of mercy. Justice was exacted of Jesus, and mercy was proffered to man. The Deity of Christ gave inconceivable sensitiveness to the agonized consciousness of Jesus; and who shall say that, in that brief hour, Jesus did not experience a sense of the awful demerit of sin and of the fierceness of God's wrath against it transcending the anguish of a lost soul? II. JESUS BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH IN THAT—1. Death was the objective end of His mission. He came in order to do. It is possible to conceive that Jesus might have assumed our nature without submitting to the law of death. In becoming a man He did not necessarily become mortal, for mortality is not an essential condition of humanity. Adam was human, but he was not created mortal. Mortality, with Him, was a consequence of disobedience: and so Jesus, in becoming human, had He seen fit,

might have been exempt from the law of death, or might have passed away by a translation, such as is recorded of Enoch and Elijah, and such as did transpire in His own history after He had risen, to die no more. But neither of these possibilities were consistent with the mission of Jesus. Without dying, His object in coming into the world would have failed of being accomplished. In this respect His death differed from ours; we are not brought into this world simply for the purpose of dying; we die because we cannot help dying. But it behoved Jesus to die. He became obedient unto death. If His object in coming into the world was to save men by the lustre of His living and by the splendour of His philosophy, why need He to have died, and why, especially, need He always have insisted upon the necessity of His death, in order that by dying He might accomplish the object which He had undertaken? 2. By the voluntary surrender of His life. Death, to us, is a surrender to an inevitable, from which we would prefer to be exempt, and at the best in most cases, it is a passive submission to a necessity, but the death of Jesus was Jesus in action. 3. In that His dying was the supreme expression of His submission to the will of the Father. It was the fitting crown of a life whose explanation was "My meat is to do the will," &c. III. WHY, IN THE ECONOMY OF GOD WAS IT NEEDFUL THAT JESUS SHOULD SUBMIT TO DEATH? 1. Because His subjection to the law of death was the highest, and an exhaustive test of the absolute subordination of His will to the will of His Father. 2. The obedience of Jesus unto death became the exhaustive ground on which God could justly remit the penalty pronounced against the sinner. 3. As the reward of His obedience Jesus was empowered with the prerogative of bestowing the gift of eternal life on all that believe on His name. (*R. Jeffercy, D.D.*) The death of the cross was — I. A VOLUNTARY DEATH. II. A DEATH OF INFINITE LOVE. III. A DEATH OF KINGLY POWER. IV. A DEATH OF TERRIBLE BODILY PAIN AND MYSTERIOUS MENTAL ANGUISH. V. A DEATH OF CALM ASSURANCE. (*R. H. Giles, B.A.*) The passion of our blessed Saviour:—1. When in consequence of original apostasy from God man had forfeited the Divine amity, when having deserted his natural Lord, other lords had got dominion over him, when according to an eternal rule of justice he stood adjudged to destruction, when all the world stood guilty before God and no remedy did appear, God out of infinite goodness designed our redemption. 2. How could this happy design be compassed in consistence with the glory, justice, and truth of God? 3. God was pleased to prosecute it, as thereby no-wise to impair but rather to advance His glory. He accordingly would be sued for mercy, nor would he grant it without compensation, and so did find us a Mediator and furnish us with means to satisfy Him. 4. But how? Where was there a Mediator worthy to intercede on our behalf? Where amongst men, one, however innocent, sufficient to do more than satisfy for himself? Where among angels, seeing that they cannot discharge more than their own debts of gratitude and service? 4. Wherefore seeing that a superabundant dignity of person was required God's arm brought salvation. 5. But how could God undertake the business? Could He become a suitor to His offended self? No, man must concur in the transaction: some amends must issue from him as the offending party. So the Eternal Word assumed human flesh and merited God's favour to us by a perfect obedience to the law, and satisfying Divine justice by pouring forth His blood in sacrifice for our sins. In this kind of passion (the death of the cross) consider divers notable adjuncts. I. ITS BEING IN APPEARANCE CRIMINAL, as in semblance being an execution of justice on Him. "He was numbered among the transgressors." "Made sin for us." He was impeached of the highest crimes, and, although innocent, for them suffered death. But why such a death, since any would have been sufficient; and why such a death odious alike to Jew and Gentile? 1. As our Saviour freely undertook a life of the greatest meanness and hardship, so we might be pleased to undergo such a death. (1) It has been well said that "no man expresses such a devotion to virtue as he who forfeits the repute of being a good man, that he may not lose the conscience of being such." So our Lord was content not only to expose His life, but His fame, for the interest of goodness. (2) Had He died otherwise, He might have seemed to purchase our welfare at a somewhat easier rate. He industriously shunned a death such as might have brought Him honour when exposed to it by the malignity of the Pharisees. Accordingly this death did not fall on Him by surprise or chance. He foresaw it from the beginning, and regarded it with satisfaction. 2. This death best suited the character of His undertaking. We deserve open condemnation and exemplary punishment, wherefore He was pleased to undergo not only an equivalent pain for us, but in a sort equal blame before God and man. 3. Seeing that

our Lord's death was a satisfaction to Divine justice, it was most fit that it should be in a way wherein God's right is most nearly concerned and plainly discernible. All judgment, as Moses says, is God's, or is administered by authority derived from Him, magistrates being His officers. So our Lord, as His answer to Pilate testifies, received the human judgment as God's. Had He suffered by private malice, His obedience had been less remarkable. 4. Our Saviour in any other way could hardly have displayed so many virtues to such advantage. His constancy, meekness, charity, &c., were seen by vast multitudes, and made matters of the greatest notoriety. Plato says that to approve a man righteous, he must be scourged, tortured, bound, have his eyes burnt out, and, at the close, having suffered all evils, must be impaled. The Greeks, then, in consistence with their own wisdom, could not reasonably scorn the Cross, which Christ freely chose to recommend the most excellent virtues to imitation. II. ITS BEING MOST PAINFUL, which demonstrated—1. The vehemence of His love. 2. The heinousness of our sins. 3. The value of the compensation. 4. The exemplification of the hardest duties of obedience and patience. III. ITS BEING MOST SHAMEFUL—a Roman punishment reserved for slaves, answering to the Jewish punishment of hanging up dead bodies. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." 1. This, ignominious in itself, exposed the sufferer to the scorn of the rude vulgar. 2. We need not doubt that our Saviour, as a man, endowed with human sensibilities, felt these indignities; and not only so, but the infinite dignity of His person and the perfect innocency of His life must have enhanced His sufferings. And so we read, "See if there be any sorrow like my sorrow." 3. And further, there was the shameful burden of sin which He bore. IV. ITS PECULIAR ADVANTAGEOUSNESS TO THE DESIGNS OF OUR LORD IN SUFFERING. 1. It was very notorious, and lasted a competent time. Had He been privately or suddenly dispatched, no great notice would have been taken of it, nor would it have been so fully proved. 2. The nature of His kingdom was thereby signified. None but a spiritual kingdom could He have designed who submitted to this suffering. 3. It was a most convenient touchstone to prove the genuine disposition and work of men, so as to discriminate those who can discern and love true goodness though so disfigured, and not be scandalized by the Cross. 4. By it God's special providence was discovered, and His glory illustrated in the propagation of the gospel; for how could such a sufferer gain so general an opinion in the world of being the Lord of life and glory without God's miraculous aid? V. ITS PRACTICAL EFFICACY. No point is more fruitful in wholesome instruction, more forcible to kindle devout affections, more efficacious in affording incentives to a pious life. 1. We are hence obliged with affection and gratitude to adore each person in the blessed Trinity. (1) The Father giving the Son. (2) The Son giving Himself. (3) The Spirit assisting the Son to offer Himself without spot. 2. What surer ground can there be of faith and hope in God—"If God spared not His own Son, &c." Who can doubt of God's goodness, despair of God's mercy, after this. 3. It should yield great joy to know that Christ hung there not only as a resolute sufferer, but as a noble conqueror over the devil, the world, the flesh, death, wrath, enmity, and strife, &c. 4. It should give us a humbling sense of our weakness and vileness to know that we needed such succour. Pride is madness in the presence of Him who made Himself of no reputation. 5. But as this contemplation doth breed sober humility, it should also preserve us from base abjectness of mind; for had not God esteemed us, He would not have debased Himself. 6. Can we reflect on this event without detestation of sin, which brought such a death on the Redeemer. 7. What in reason can be more powerful towards working penitential sorrow and religious fear, and stimulating true obedience? 8. It affords strong engagements to charity, to know that out of compassion for us Christ suffered. 9. It should breed a disregard for the world and its vanities, and reconcile us to even the worst condition? For who can suffer as Christ suffered. 10. It will incline us to submit cheerfully to God's will to remember that Christ learned obedience by the things He suffered. (*I. Barrow, D.D.*) *The Cross the fountain of merit*.—I. THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S MERIT. 1. Let us gain a clear idea of a meritorious act. (1) It must be good. Actions claiming the highest regards of God are those which have an intrinsic perfectness, and which, when looked at on all sides, are in entire correspondence with the mind and will of God. Christ's actions in perfectness contrast with those of the creature. Their peculiar goodness arises from the absence of any stain of sin and any material defect: our good actions have both these drawbacks. (2) It must be voluntary. Even an heroic action loses its moral value if necessitated. Personal effort freely

made lies at the root of all sacrifice. Christ's actions were of this character (Rom. xv. 36; Luke xxii. 42). (3) Our Lord's actions could have obtained no merit, whatever their perfection, had they resulted only from His natural powers. Nature, even when pure, cannot purchase a supernatural reward. Grace must aid and enrich the operation of the human faculties. Even in Christ grace imparted worth to His natural actions (John v. 19). Christ as man had within Himself the foundations of a true merit, and by His Divine personality communicated to His actions an infinite value. 2. Yet after all, with this combination of natural, supernatural, and Divine energies in the work of Christ, its claim on Divine retribution must rest on some covenant or promise. Merit in the sense of an action to which a reward is due on grounds of justice can only exist where there is some stipulation. The merit which appeals to goodness sets up no claim; that which rests on fidelity involves a promise; that which trusts to the justice of the rewarder implies a covenant. Not to reward in the one case may be churlishness; in the other it would be to break one's word; whilst in the third there would be positive dishonesty. For God therefore to be liable to any claim, He must have graciously condescended to involve Himself in an obligation. Such a covenant was made with Abraham (Heb. vi. 17, 18). The entering into covenant and confirming by an oath were human types and shadows of the great covenant between God and man in Christ (Heb. vii. 21). God has entered into covenant with man in Christ to crown with a reward those works which Christ first wrought in Himself, and afterwards by His grace should work through His members. All is traceable to Divine mercy as its first source (Psa. lxiii. 12), yet it is the Divine justice which is represented as under an obligation to repay the services which are rendered (Heb. vi. 10). There is nothing derogatory to the sacred manhood of Christ in this covenant. If the Son could address the Father, and say, "Lo, I come," &c., we can conceive the human will of Christ in fulfilling the Father's will as resting on the Divine promise (Psa. xvi. 10, 11; Acts i. 4). II. THE CROSS AS ITS FOUNTAIN. 1. The merit of the Cross rested on the whole of His life: as He foresaw His passion, so He accepted it. 2. The Cross is the great instrument in the acquirement of merit on two grounds. Merit may be calculated by the condition of the person who merits, or by the difficulty of the action. Thus if Adam in Paradise, and some of His fallen descendants were to perform the same virtuous action, the act of the former would have more merit in the one sense; the act of the latter in the other. In the latter sense the Cross outstrips all other portions of our Saviour's life in its value. In it the activities of endurance were taxed to the utmost limit. To bear up under fierce pain for a few hours is a greater test of moral strength than the lifelong efforts of a healthy person. Not, however, that suffering in itself is acceptable to God; the thief suffered; it was the way in which the purpose for which it was borne which made it acceptable. 3. The Cross completed the treasure of merit. The Cross was the ultimate limit of those labours which purchased a reward. The resurrection, ascension, &c., could add nothing. Merit ceased with the Cross: what follows is reward (John xix. 30). 4. The atoning value of the Cross lay in the removal of a hindrance: its meritoriousness acquired a positive gain. The removal of sin was the preliminary to Divine communications. Human nature was not left in a state of neutrality, as if God should look upon it without wrath or favour, but was again to become the subject of Divine complacency. III. THE OBJECT FOR WHOM THIS MERIT WAS ACQUIRED. 1. For Himself (ver. 9; Heb. ii. 9; Luke xxiv. 26, 46; Psa. cx. 7; Heb. xii. 2). It was not simply glory for His body that He purchased, but exaltation and kingly power; a name above every name. 2. For all. He took the nature of all, and thus merited for all (Heb. ii. 14). But although He merited for all, all do not receive the grace He purchased. A fountain is useless to the thirsty unless they drink. What is necessary therefore is for us to become the recipients of His grace? We must have union with Christ for pardon and life (John xv. 16, i. 16; 2 Pet. i. 4). Christ saves by becoming a new principle of life in the soul through the action of the Divine Spirit. (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*) *Christ's humiliation and exaltation* (text and following):—I. "FOR THIS CAUSE." 1. A cause there is. God ever exalts for a cause. Here on earth it is otherwise. Some men as Shebna, Haman, Sanballat, are exalted no man knows wherefor. 2. For what cause? His humility. Of all causes not for that, says the world. The word was not in the list of heathen virtues. Yet this last virtue is the ground of Christ exulting. (1) "He humbled"—so great a person. For one of mean estate to be humble is no great praise, it were a fault were he not; but for a king, nay the King of kings to show this great humility, is a cause indeed.

(2) "Himself." Of His own accord. One may be humbled and not humble. Pharaoh was humbled by His ten plagues. Simon was compelled to humble his neck under the Cross. But here is true humility. (3) It was not Absalom's humility, in show, his heart being full of pride and rebellion. And yet it is a glory for humility that even proud men take a pride to shroud themselves in her mantle. But it is not humble courtesy, but humble obedience here. (4) But there is an obedience which cometh from natural reason; but some other there be wherein there is no other reason but the will of a lawful superior. All look to the former, very few to the latter; but even so obeyed Christ. (5) The extent of our obedience is a matter considerable. Obedience in some petty matter is little worth. How far obedient? Until what? Unto humanity had been enough, to servitude were more. But Christ's obedience was unto—(a) Death. That staggers the best of us. We love obedience in a whole skin. And why should obedience come to that? Death is the wages of sin. Obedient and yet put to death? Even so; rather than lose His obedience He lost His life. (b) The worst death. Nay, if He must die, let Him die a honest fair death. Not so. II. "GOD HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM." This exaltation is—1. Personal. (1) From whence. From death. His humiliation had been to the ground, into the lowest parts of it; His exaltation was from thence. (2) Whither. From death to life, from shame to glory, from the form of a servant to the dignity of a sovereign. Not to Lazarus' life again, but to life immortal; from shame to the glory of the Father which shall never fade, as all here shall. 2. The exaltation of His name, the amends for the Cross. Without a name what is exalting? Things that are exalted seem not to be so until their name go abroad in the world. And when men are so high that they cannot get higher there is no way to exalt them but to dilate their names, which every noble generous spirit had rather have than any dignity. How will they jeopard dignity and even life but to leave a glorious name behind them. But what name was given here? "the name of Jesus." (1) Of this giving three doubts arise. (a) How given. Him and others had it also (Heb. iv. 8; Hag. i. 1). They had it of men, He of God. All these Jesuses had need of and were glad "to lay hold of the skirts" of this Jesus to be saved by Him. (b) He had it before. True, but by a kind of anticipation, for it never had its perfect verification till after the crucifixion. (c) But if given Him *ἔχαριστο* "of grace," where is the merit then? Answer. That which is due may be cheerfully parted with as though it were a gift. But this grace is not the grace of adoption, but that of union. (2) How is this name above all names. (a) To Him. It is esteemed more than any other title of Deity by Him; because His glory is in it joined to our safety. (b) To us. For it is the only name by which we can be saved. With this name there is comfort in the name of God; without it none at all. 3. "That at the name of Jesus," &c. God, though He have so exalted it, yet reckons it not exalted until we exalt it too. So we are to esteem it above every name, and to show our esteem by bowing with the knee and confessing with the tongue. (1) These are outward acts: so the exalting of the soul is not enough. Our body is to afford her part, and not the upper parts, the tongue in the head, but also the lower, the knee in the leg. (2) "Every knee"—(a), "Shall bow," for what better way to exalt Him than by our humility, who for His humility was exalted. This honour is awarded Christ for the death of the Cross; shall we, then, rob Him of it? And He will not have us worship Him like elephants, as if we had no joints in our knees; He will have more honour of men than of pillars in the Church. (b) Bow to His name. His person is out of sight, but His name is left behind that we may do reverence to it. But why to this name rather than to that of Christ? Christ cannot be the name of God, for God cannot be anointed. Christ was anointed that He might be Jesus—Saviour. But it is not to the syllables of the name that we are to bow. The name is not the sound but the sense—Him who is named. Of course a superstitious use has been made of this act; so there has of hearing sermons. Shall we therefore abandon hearing as well as kneeling? No! Remove the superstition and retain both. It is well to drive away superstition, but it will be well not to drive away reverence with it. (3) He farther requires somewhat from the tongue. And reason: that member of all others is our glory (Psa. lvi. 8), our peculiarity above the beasts; they will be taught to bow, we have tongues to do something more than they. Besides the knee is only dumb acknowledgment, but a vocal confession utters our mind plainly, and this He calls *ἑξομολόγησις*. Three things are in it. λόγος we must say somewhat; ὁμοῦ, do it together, not some speak and others keep mute; εἰ, speak out, not whisper. And it was the praise of the primitive Church that they did it jointly and aloud; that their Amen, as Jerome saith,

was like a clap of thunder, and their Hallelujah as the roaring of the sea. (b) Why the knee first—because we thereby put ourselves in mind of due regard to Him in reverence, and are therefore the fitter to speak of and to Him with respect. (c) Every knee and tongue. They in heaven “cast down their crowns and fall down” and confess Him singing (Rev. iv. 10); they under the earth are thrown down and made His footstool (Psa. cx. 1); they on earth, as in the midst, partake of both. The better sort get to their knees gladly, and cheerfully confess Him. Infidels and Christians little better are forced to “fall backward,” and in the end to cry “Vicisti Galilæe,” though they guard their tongues when they have done. (d) See our lot. Exalted He shall be with our wills or without them. Either fall on our knees now, or be cast on our faces then; either confess Him with saints and angels, or with devils and damned spirits. (e) Every tongue shall do this, *i.e.*, every speech and dialect in the world. Where are they, then, who deny any tongue the faculty here granted, or bar any of them the duty here enjoined, that lock up the public confession in some one tongue or two? 4. But though thus many tongues, one confession that “Jesus Christ is Lord.” (1) Lord whereof? (Matt. xvi. 19; Rev. iii. 7; i. 18, xx. 2-3). (2) No man can confess this “but by the Holy Ghost.” (3) Confess what? that Jesus is a Lord to save (Matt. xiv. 30), and a Lord to serve (Acts ix. 6). The first we like well, but the latter not so (Luke vi. 46). 5. “To the glory of the Father,” whose great glory it is that His Son is Lord of such servants, that men shall say, “see what servants He hath.” How full of reverence to His name! How free and forward to do His will. (*Bishop Andrewes.*) *Humility*.—The flower of humility fills the air with perfume, but its leaves lie hidden in the shade. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Christ's obedience unto death*.—His was no mere resignation, for that is the attitude of the soul toward the inevitable. A creature may risk his life, indeed, provided the aim be a true and noble one; but no right is his to throw it away. He is, on the contrary, bound to conserve it, if he can do so without the sacrifice of higher interests. But Christ Jesus in His perfect obedience died, because He so willed, and when and as He willed. There stands in a Strasburg church a monument suggestive in its sculptured group. It is the figure of a warrior before an open grave. Death at his side is touching him with his inevitable dart, and he is represented as descending with manly step, but saddened brow, into the sepulchre yawning at his feet. Thus is depicted the lot of our common humanity. “It is appointed unto men once to die,” and when death comes, he comes resistlessly. Thus are depicted, further, the noble submission and fortitude with which the brave man, brave because he is good, meets death. But with the Captain of our salvation it was far otherwise. He had His life either to give or to keep. He gave His life with all its preciousness, a freewill offering, a priceless sacrifice “of a sweet-smelling savour unto God.” (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*) *Obedient unto death*.—During the wars of the first Napoleon, in a naval engagement, the son of the captain of a vessel was placed by his father at a certain post and charged to keep it till his return. The captain was killed, and his vessel given over to the enemy. The boy's position became dangerous, and he was urged to quit it. “No,” said he, “my father told me to stay till he came back.” And so listening in vain for the voice which alone he would obey, he perished in the explosion of the ship. (*W. Harris.*)

Vers. 9-11. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him.—*The exaltation of Christ*.—I. ITS OCCASION. 1. His voluntary humiliation. 2. His Divine investitures. II. ITS IMPORT. 1. The glorification of humanity. 2. Investment with supreme sovereignty. III. ITS OBJECT. 1. The subordination of every creature. 2. To the human Mediator. IV. ITS ULTIMATE ISSUE. 1. The subjection of every foe. 2. The universal acknowledgment of Christ. 3. The full revelation of the glory of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The exaltation of Christ*.—I. The exaltation as THE REWARD OF THE OBEDIENCE. 1. The same Person is exalted who humbled Himself. We must not say that He was exalted in His humanity. It was not the man alone who humbled Himself. “Is Christ divided?” 2. The supreme elevation could never have been the prerogative of any created being. None but the eternal Son of the Father could have received or sustained it. But as the reward of His redeeming submission it could only be received in the person of Him who was man as well as God. 3. The redeeming God-man merited well in His obedience and death, and received an eternal and unlimited acknowledgment of His claim. The justice of God was satisfied by the punishment vicariously endured; and the love of God accepted that

satisfaction as an expiation cancelling the sinner's obligation to suffer. And the elevation of the sufferer was the declaration that the merit of His supreme obedience availed for the whole world. 4. The very word here used is that which is employed concerning those to whom the benefit of Christ's merit is applied. We are "accepted" in the Beloved, or "graced" in Him; He was "accepted" or "graced" with the high rewards of exaltation. That, indeed, was His exaltation: not to have a name above every name simply, but to have in Himself a fulness of merit that should avail for all. II. The exaltation as THE NECESSARY CONDITION OF THE REDEEMING AND SAVING WORK. 1. As our representative Christ was exalted, *i.e.*, as the mediatorial Redeemer. The resurrection and ascension are most frequently regarded as part of the process of His saving course. As He fulfilled that course He must needs pass into the heavens. In His Divine human person He has "gone up higher," but is still continuing His ministration. Had the merit of His sacrifice been simply rewarded as such, apart from His redeeming ministry, the Incarnate would have been set down literally on a throne to rest for ever. In that case the language of the passage would have been different. 2. The saving name of Jesus is exalted. The "name" cannot refer to any particular designation conferred after the ascension; we know not what name could have been added to the glorious catalogue from "Emmanuel," the first, to "Lord Jesus," the last. We know from the Apocalypse that He has a new name, but we know also that it is only the old name more abundantly glorified; a name which He had from the incarnation, but whose full meaning could never be known until His human nature had passed through all its processes of discipline and become perfect. It is the mediatorial name, therefore, that is exalted, and that name is Jesus. Our Saviour's dignity is His power to save, only now He redeems not by price but by power. III. The exaltation as RECEIVING UNIVERSAL RECOGNITION. 1. The homage paid to the name of Jesus is not here regarded as offered at once. It is the gradual result of His supremacy in heaven enforced in the promulgation of His claims on earth. (1) The "beings in heaven" accepted the dignity of Jesus at once, and are first mentioned because they are the loftiest and most honourable. They watched His career and studied it intently; for He was seen of angels. A gradual recognition can hardly be asserted in their case, and in no sense can the Lord's supremacy be said to have been enforced on them. (2) "Beings on earth" represent the whole race. The world is His because He has redeemed it, and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess—all science, philosophy, policy, power, genius, art. Before the scene of redemption ceases to be visited by His gospel and grace His Jesus name shall have been accepted by all mankind either in loyal love or despair. (3) And "under the earth" also. Not a soul rebels there. He is Lord of the dead, and when the end comes Hades shall go out of existence at His word. 2. The confession is offered to the Lordship of Jesus. Our Lord receives this name in various senses. (1) In one sense we may regard it as human purely as often in the gospels where the people seem to regard Him as a distinguished servant of God; and yet the language seems to waver between the respect due to a rabbi and the adoration due to God. Most beautifully does Thomas in the end rise from that human Lordship to the divinity of that Saviour whose dignity he felt at last. (2) In another and pre-eminent sense Jesus is Lord as representing the Jehovah of the Old Testament; and in that sense He shares the dignity with the Lord the Spirit. (3) But chiefly our Lord is such as the Mediatorial Person invested with authority over men and over the universe in consequence of His submission to the death of the Cross, as here. This dominion is given to One who deserved it by obedience, though He was capable of it only as God. IV. The exaltation as REDOUNDING TO THE GLORY OF GOD. The whole mystery of the economical submission, obedience, exaltation, and dominion of Christ tends to the glory of the Father. 1. The Father is literally the Father of the Eternal Son made flesh, and not the Deity in general. The Father is the essential as well as the redeeming name of Him to whom all glory is finally given. 2. The success of the mediatorial government of our Lord redounds to the glory of the Father inasmuch as it will justify and exalt the supreme wisdom of Him who originated the plan. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) The mediatorial exaltation involves the two stupendous facts which close Christ's earthly career. I. THE EVIDENCE OF THE FACT OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. II. THE EVIDENCE OF OUR LORD'S ASCENSION IS ALSO CLEAR. 1. It is twice recorded by St. Luke. 2. It was public. 3. It was predicted by Christ. 4. The promise of the Holy Spirit which was to follow it was fulfilled. 5. It formed a staple doctrine of apostolic teaching. 6. The Christian doctrine of heaven depends upon

the fact that Christ ascended to the Father (John xiv. 1, &c.). III. WHAT FOLLOWS FROM OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION. 1. The glorified Christ has received a name that is above every name. (1) That name stands for the reality it implies—Saviour. (2) The name has accrued to Him because in what He is, has done, is doing, and will do, the rich meaning of the name is realized. (3) The name is above because including every other name. (4) In it believers glory, by it hearts are won, before it heaven bows in worship, at it hell trembles with fear. 2. To this exalted Saviour all dominion is entrusted. (1) Heaven, with its angels, principalities, and powers. (2) Earth—men, forces, empires. (3) The under-world—His widest human dominion. 3. That dominion will be universally acknowledged (John vi. 38–40; Rev. i. 7; 2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Thess. i. 7–10; 1 Cor. xv. 24–28). IV. THE ULTIMATE END AND AIM OF THE SAVIOUR'S MEDIATORIAL REIGN WILL BE THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER. 1. The Redeemer looked for this—"Father, glorify thy Son!" &c. 2. The mediatorial work was undertaken and discharged with reference to this. (*C. Clemance, D.D.*) *Christ's exaltation*:—I. IN THE VERY FACT OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION THERE IS TO EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN A VERY LARGE DEGREE OF COMFORT. He has certain features of character which make it so. 1. He has a relationship with Christ, and therefore feels an interest in the success of His kinsman. 2. He has a feeling of unity in the cause. He shares the exaltation in some degree, seeing that he has sympathy with Christ's desire of promoting God's cause in the world. Every soldier feels honoured when his general is applauded for the victory, inasmuch as he has helped him to gain it. 3. The Christian knows that there is a real union between Christ and His people, now, therefore, that our Head is crowned he cannot, being so intimately interested, but rejoice. Christ is in heaven as our representative. The throne He occupies is for the Church whom He represents. In Him we, too, are exalted. 4. The Christian has surrendered his whole being to the work of honouring Christ, and therefore feels that in his Saviour's exaltation his whole desire is consummated. He cares not what happens to himself so long as he can say, "The Lord reigneth." II. Another well-spring of joy is found in THE REASON OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION. Because of—1. His humiliation. The Christian need feel no pain in being humbled: the same joy is set before him as was set before his Lord. 2. His obedience. Let the Christian obey and he will win the same reward. III. Another source of comfort is found in THE PERSON WHO EXALTED HIM. 1. Neither Christ nor the Christian are self-crowned autocrats; and the same hand that crowned Him will crown us. He, "King of kings," we "kings unto God and His Father." 2. Man never exalted Christ, but dishonoured and rejected Him—but God exalted Him. Believer, if all men speak ill of thee, think "the servant is not above his Lord." 3. Christ did not exalt Himself, nor can you in depression of spirits, humbleness of position, but God can and will. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Of Christ's exaltation*. 1. The first step was HIS RESURRECTION. II. The second HIS ASCENSION. III. The third HIS SITTING ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD (Heb. i. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Eph. i. 20). 1. This is to be understood in a figurative sense as denoting.—(1) Majesty and honour (2 Kings ii. 19; Psal. xlv. 9). (2) Power (Psal. lxxvii. 10). 2. Christ sitting here denotes—(1) A state of rest (Micah iv. 4; Heb. x. 12). (2) Continuance in that state (2 Kings vii. 3). 3. It denotes—(1) The accomplishment of that work, and the consummation of all those offices which He was to perform on earth for the redemption of sinners (Heb. iv. 10). (2) The delight and satisfaction the Father had in Christ, and in that glorious work which He had finished (Psal. cx. 1). (3) The great honour and dignity to which He is advanced in heaven (Heb. i. 13). (4) His being invested with sovereign dominion and supreme authority and power (Heb. ii. 7–8). 4. The ends for which He sits. (1) That as a mighty King He may protect and defend His Church and people against the rage of their enemies (Isa. xxxii. 1–2; Deut. xxxiii. 26–27). (2) That He may subdue all the enemies of His people (Psal. cx. 1; Acts ii. 36; Heb. x. 12–13; 1 Cor. xv. 25). (3) That with royal munificence He may dispense to His faithful subjects all these gifts and graces that may qualify them for glory (Acts v. 31). (4) That He may act as a powerful intercessor for them (Rom. viii. 34). (5) That all His friends and followers may with Him be translated into heaven and be advanced into the glorious state of kings and priests (Eph. i. 4–6; Rev. iii. 21). 5. Use. (1) Behold the great difference between our Redeemer's earthly and heavenly state. (2) How highly our nature is dignified and ennobled in the person of our Redeemer. (3) This lets us see that the redemption of lost sinners was pleasing unto the Father. (4) We should draw near to Him in all the duties of worship with the reverence that befits His Majesty. (5) Let this

exalted Redeemer have your hands and your heart. (6) Let this settle and compose the Lord's people with respect to the state and interests of Christ's kingdom (Isa. lii. 7). IV. The last step is HIS COMING TO JUDGE THE WORLD. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Christ's exaltation*.—In the former verses the Sun of Righteousness is eclipsed; here He shines forth in all His strength and splendour. The doctrine of Christ's humiliation leads you to Mount Calvary; but this doctrine leads you to Mount Olivet. There you may see Christ standing at the bar; here you see Him sitting on the throne. I. THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION. 1. It pleased God that He who humbled Himself should be "made higher than the heavens," that He who appeared as a servant should now appear as the Lord of Glory. The word "highly exalted" is emphatic and singular; His exaltation was super-superlative. Jesus Christ in His resurrection was exalted; in His ascension "highly exalted;" in His sitting at the right hand of God "very highly exalted above all exaltation." In His resurrection, He was exalted above the grave; in His ascension, above the earth; in His session, above the highest heavens. The steps of Christ's exaltation answered the steps of His humiliation. (1) His incarnation is answerable to His resurrection, for by the first He was "manifest in the flesh" the Son of Man; by the second "declared to be the Son of God with power" (Rom. i. 3-4). (2) His poor, painful, and shameful life, and His painful and cursed death, is answerable to His ascension and sitting at the right hand of God. In the one He was disparaged, in the second honoured. In the disparagement He was lower than the angels; in the honour, far above them (Heb. i. 5-13; Eph. i. 20-22). (3) His coming to judge the world answers His being judged by the world. The former is the completion of His exaltation as the latter was of His degradation (Isa. liii; John v. 22-23). Jesus by His resurrection overcame His enemies (Heb. ii. 14); by His ascension triumphed over them (Cor. ii. 15); by His Judgeship He tries and condemns them. For the further demonstration of His exaltation note—2. That God hath given Him a name that is above every name. (1) What is to be understood by this name—the power, dignity, and authority with which Christ was invested. (a) Sometimes name is put for glory and renown (Gen. vi. 4; 1 Chron. v. 24, Heb.); thus Christ is invested with the glory of the only begotten of the Father (b) for the power and sovereignty by which Christ is King of nations and of saints (John x. 25; Acts iii. 6, iv. 7). Of this He spake at the ascension (Matt. xxviii. 18). And the glory of Christ's name is such that shall be celebrated through all ages (Luke ii. 10-14; Heb. i. 6; Rev. v. 12). (2) How hath Christ obtained a name above every name. This name is a demonstration of Christ's super-exaltation, and notes four things. (a) That Jesus should be the only Saviour of the world (Acts iv. 11-12). (b) In that He is exalted to sit at the right hand of God, which is a name or honour angels never had (Heb. i. 3, 4, 13). (c) Because it is through this name that the name of God becomes a comfort to us. The attributes of God are the "name of God." To a Christless sinner all the attributes of God are against Him: wisdom (Jer. xvii. 10; 1 John iii. 20); holiness (Hab. i. 13); justice; omnipotence. But the name of Christ makes the name of God a sanctuary (Prov. xviii. 10), and a comfort: wisdom (Psa. lxxiii. 24; Matt. vi. 32); holiness (1 Cor. i. 10); justice (Rom. iii. 25-26; viii. 1); omnipotence (Rom. viii. 31). (d) Because His name should be most precious and powerful in His Church through all generations (Matt. xviii. 20; John xiv. 13; 1 Cor. v. 4; Matt. xxviii. 19). (3) How are we to understand that God hath given Him a name? As Mediator; for so only was He capable of exaltation. Not as God, for that cannot be, nor in the sense of the manifestation of His glory, for the sun is not exalted when the cloud is removed; nor as mere man, for humanity is incapable of such exaltation and worship; but as God-man. 3. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. (1) What is meant by bowing the knee. Some understand this literally, but if "name" stands for power then kneeling must mean submission (Gen. xli. 43; John v. 22-23). (2) Who shall bow? (a) All knees in heaven voluntarily. (i) The good angels who always obeyed and honoured Christ (Dan. ix. 24-25; Luke i. 30-31, ii. 13-14; Matt. ii. 13, iv. 11; Luke xxii. 43; Matt. xxviii. 6; Acts i. 11; Heb. i. 6; Matt. xxv. 31). All this service was performed unto Christ, not only as Creator (Col. i. 16), but as Governor (Col. ii. 10; Eph. i. 21-22). (ii) The spirits of just men made perfect (Rev. v. 9-10; iv. 8, 10). (b) On earth (i) good men willingly (Psa. cx. 3). By nature they are children of disobedience (Col. iii. 6-7, 1, 21; Rom. viii. 7). But the grace of God removes that "iron sinew" (Isa. xlviii. 4). (ii) Evil men under compulsion; because they do not willingly bear Christ's yoke they shall become His footstool (Psa. cx. 1). (c) In hell (Luke x. 17, viii. 28-32;

James ii. 19; Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14). 4. That every tongue shall confess, &c. (1) What is meant by every tongue? Not simply every nation but every person. (2) What is meant by Jesus is Lord? (1 Cor. ii. 8). (a) As Creator (1 Cor. viii. 6; Rom. xi. 36). (b) As Son of God (Heb. i. 2-4). (c) As such He is a Lord to command us and to save us. (3) As every knee must bow to Christ's dominion so every tongue must confess Him Lord. (a) Devils and wicked men (Rev. vi. 16). (b) Saints and angels (Rev. v. 12-13). II. THE END OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION. As God had no motive without Himself, so He had no end beyond Himself in giving Christ (Eph. i. 6). For this Christ prayed (John xii. 28). III. APPLICATION. 1. Use of information, as Christ first suffered and entered into His glory (Luke xxiv. 26), even so must we (Acts xiv. 22; 2 Tim. ii. 11). 2. Use of exhortation. Is Christ exalted? Then let us, our tongues, knees, hearts, lives, acknowledge Him to be our Lord. (1) What Jews, Pilate, and Herod did in scorn, let us do in sincerity. (2) Let us take heed that we do not violate our allegiance to Him (Exod. v. 2; Psa. xii. 4; Luke xix. 27). (a) Christ is only a Saviour to those who submit to Him (Heb. v. 9; Tit. ii. 11-12). (b) Every knee must one day bow to Him. (c) The sins of Christians are far greater than those of the Jews against Christ who sinned against Him in His state of humiliation (Heb. vi. 6). They did it in ignorance (Acts iii. 17; 1 Cor. ii. 1). (d) Christ at last will be too hard for the hardest-hearted sinner. 3. Use of comfort to believers. (1) Is Christ exalted? then we may comfortably believe that He hath perfectly satisfied God's justice for us. (2) Christ though exalted is still mindful of us (Heb. ii. 15-18). (3) Christ is exalted to heaven, and so shall all believers be in due time (John xvii. 24; Cor. iii. 4). (W. Taylor, A.B.)

Ver. 9. God hath . . . given Him a name which is above every name.—*The name of Jesus*, as it appears—I. ON THE PAGE OF HISTORY. 1. Its origin. 2. Import. 3. Associations. 4. Claims. II. IN THE ESTIMATE OF MAN. 1. Despised and hated. 2. Admired and wondered at. 3. Beloved and revered. III. IN THE PURPOSE OF GOD: triumphant, worshipped by all in heaven, on earth, under the earth. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) The name Jesus means Saviour (Matt. i. 21). I. THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE SAVED FROM: sin. 1. From its penalty. 2. From its guilt. Desert of punishment is worse than punishment itself. 3. From its power. The sinner needs not only cleansing from the past, but protection for the future. II. THERE IS ONE WHO WILL SAVE (1 Tim. i. 15). How? 1. By His incarnation, getting Himself into connection with man's nature and condition. 2. By His work of reconciliation. 3. By winning man's attention, gratitude, and trust through His own unutterable condescension. 4. By cleansing him from sin. (*G. D. Boardman, D.D.*) The name above every name:—I. Its acquisition. The name of Jesus was—1. Chosen by God. 2. Sanctified and approved by Christ's suffering. 3. Glorified by His exaltation. II. Its glory. None other is—1. So great. 2. So mighty. 3. So dear. 4. So enduring. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) A name is a call-word by which we separate objects and give to each its identity. I. The names, however, of FAMILIAR OBJECTS are not mere arbitrary signs, but symbols of quality. The words eagle, horse, bring a picture before the imagination. No picture rises at a foreign name, although it discriminates and separates. *Homo* once had a picture in it, but not now: although man has. II. We see this more strikingly illustrated in the names of MEN. A village of people have their portraits in their names. 1. Physically. As A. is called, there is a vision of a tall man; as B., of a short man. 2. Socially and economically. One man would be generous and another stingy. 3. Morally. Faith, zeal, genius, are stored up in names. III. We see that PERSONAL names stand for abstract excellences. Thus lover, father, child, &c., go to signify domestic excellences. When the word mother is spoken, not only does your mother come forth to your imagination in feature, but those qualities which make all mothers differ from other relations. IV. By the extension of this practice NAMES COME TO SIGNIFY HISTORIC QUALITIES. Plato means thought; Demosthenes, eloquence; Nero, cruelty; Napoleon, military genius; Howard, philanthropy. V. THE NAME OF JESUS IS ABOVE EVERY NAME; not simply that His name is highest on the list, although that is the fact. We are to give to the term "name" as applied to Him its full proportions and richness of meaning. 1. Christ's name is above that of all historical personages. The sum of their life is small compared to the magnitude of His. 2. If you gather the witnesses and martyrs that have lived in every age, the great men and nobles of whom the world was not worthy, there is not one of them that is not dwarfed by the side of the

name of Jesus. 3. If you go from the best specimens of men to philosophers, poets, scholars, whatever admiration is bestowed on them, no one would dream that their name was to be mentioned by the side of His. 4. There are judges' names that signify perfect justice, kings' and princes' that signify authority, splendour, and power. But has the world stored up in any of these names such associations as belong to Jesus? Is there anywhere such justice and imperialness as there are in Him? Already His name stands higher for the very qualities which go to make courts illustrious, that make men glorious in history. Once a culprit under the hand of Rome, but now through a wider world than the Roman, those governments who do not acknowledge Him are feeble and barbarous. 5. But there is a more important matter of comparison—the names of chief power on the heart—heart-names. In each quality which makes the dearest names in life Christ so excels that He is infinitely above all others. (1) All the love and authority which there is in "father" is dark compared with that special element in Jesus. Christ is more in those very qualities which make a father dear to his children than all fathers. (2) All those indescribable and tender graces which make "mother" the queenly name Christ has in such abundance and perfectness that a mother's heart by the side of His would be like a taper at mid-day. (3) He is more tender in love than any lover ever knew how to be. No love-letter was ever written which can compare with what may be gathered from the Bible describing the inflexions of Divine love toward men. (4) The enduring intimacy of exalted love in true wedlock carries up our conceptions of possible happiness to the very gate of heaven, but when we have carried it to the uttermost there comes the outbursting light of that mystic love of Christ to the Church which rides higher than poetry can follow or than experience ever went. (5) But this world is but our outhouse of creation. When we have carried these suggestions from the realm of experience up to invisible heaven, we find that the name of Jesus is above all these. There are beings who rise not only higher than men in wisdom, power, goodness, &c., but there is a gradation among them: thrones, dominions, &c., in long succession; and we find Christ towering above them, "chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." (H. W. Beecher.) *The name above every name:—*The Saviour's name is above every name in respect of—I. THE GREATNESS IT REPRESENTS. There is in it—I. The greatness of nature. That which is not natively great cannot be truly and pre-eminently great. Can the native greatness of Christ be less than that of Deity if He is capable of receiving the glory, power, and dominion that are ascribed to Him? There are two extremes of error: the Unitarian, assimilating the Divine in Christ to the human; and the Roman Catholic, ascribing to the human Virgin what can only be Divine. 2. Greatness of character. Christ is the greatest of characters, because in Him meet all the attributes of Godhead and all the perfections of manhood. 3. The greatness of mission and work. In His mediation confessedly He stands alone; for a race that needs salvation cannot raise up one as a partaker of the Saviour in His work. II. THE INFLUENCE WHICH IT EXERTS. 1. Through it alone salvation comes as a personal possession. 2. Every blessing that comes to the soul comes in connection with this name. 3. The results of experimental Christianity will not work where His name is denied or ignored. Physical, and even moral, truths may bless the world when their propounders are forgotten. Not so with the truth as it is in Jesus. In vain we are told that religion is not a matter of history. Take away what is Divine in Jesus, and you put out the sun and endeavour to produce light by a book on optics. III. THE SPACE WHICH IT FILLS. Wherever there is intelligence it is understood; wherever there is loyalty it is adored. It is coincident with civilization, law, liberty, social ties, and charities; a name of welcome and cheer to all that is true, lovely, and of good report. IV. THE PERIOD THROUGH WHICH IT ENDURES. There are names chronicled in history which we would willingly let die; but there is a fitness and reasonableness in the perpetuation of Christ's name. At the same time there is something surprising in it. Christ endures in an entirely different character from great conquerors and geniuses, as the founder of true religion, and the head of the Church. The name of Mohammed still endures, but is waning, whereas that of Jesus is going into new regions. This, too, in spite of opposition to His claims. (*Principal Cairns.*) *The music of two syllables:—*The name of Jesus is—I. AN EASY NAME. 1. Easily pronounced. There are names so long and difficult that they have to be repeated before we venture to speak them; but within the first two years a child clasps its hands and says Jesus. 2. Easily remembered. Sometimes we have to pause before we can recall the names of our best friends, but we cannot imagine the

freak of intellect in which we could forget this. 3. Easily recognized. The dying have been known to be oblivious to everything else. II. A BEAUTIFUL NAME. It is impossible to dissociate a name from the person who bears it. Names which are attractive to some are repulsive to others, because the same name is borne by different persons, and thus they convey pleasant or painful suggestions to different people. But this name is the same to all, and stands for love, patience, magnanimity, and every beautiful quality. To the penitent, afflicted, aged, it is alike beautiful. III. A MIGHTY NAME. Rothschild is a potent name in the financial world, Cuvier in the scientific, Wellington in the military; but no name is so potent to awe, lift, thrill, and bless as that of Jesus. That one word unhorsed Saul, and flung Newton on his face. That name in England means more than the queen; in Germany more than the emperor. At its utterance sin, infidelity, sorrow, and death flee away. All the millions of the race are to know and honour it. IV. AN ENDURING NAME. You pull aside the weeds and see the faded inscription on the tombstone. That was the name of a man who once ruled that town. The mightiest names in the world are perishing or have perished. Gregory VI., Richard I., Louis XIV., names that once made the world tremble, mean now to the mass absolutely nothing. But the name of Christ is to live for ever. It will be perpetuated in art, in song, in architecture, in literature, and above all, will be embalmed in the memory of the good on earth and all the great ones in heaven. To destroy it would require a universal conflagration. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The exalted name of Jesus*:—I. The MEANING of the name (Matt. i. 18, &c.)—Saviour, "for He shall save His people from their sins." Who shall save? "He." Not we or they. If I could save myself, Christ would be no more Jesus to me. II. ITS POWER. 1. It has power as an authority. It gave Peter and John authority to heal the cripple, Paul and Silas to dispossess the damsel of the devil, and all to proclaim salvation. 2. As a test (Col. iii. 17) of lawfulness and unlawfulness, &c. "Can I do this or that in this name?" 3. As a plea; in prayer for pardon and blessing. "Whatsoever ye ask the Father in My name," &c. III. ITS MAJESTY. There have been great names in the world—Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon; but these have little majesty compared with those of Abraham, David, and Paul. But there are names higher than these—Michael, Gabriel. But all these are dim as fading stars compared with His, whose glory is as the rising sun, whose beams shall illumine a whole universe. At it all shall one day bend the knee. IV. ITS PRECIOUSNESS. What makes the name of home precious? Its hallowed associations. And round this name do cluster the sweetest memories, endearing it to pardoned sinners. Whisper that one word Jesus, and I think of Bethlehem and Calvary, and faces of the dear departed rise before me, and I hear once more the old songs, and see the light of former Sabbaths. All heaven is hidden in the name, and all hopes hang upon it. (*H. G. Guinness.*) *The importance of a name*:—There are merely human names that thrill you through and through. Such a name was that of Henry Clay to the Kentuckian, William Wirt to the Virginian, Daniel Webster to the New Englander. By common proverb we have come to believe that there is nothing in a name, and so parents sometimes present their children for baptism regardless of the title given them, and not thinking that that particular title will be either a hindrance or a help. Strange mistake. You have no right to give to your child a name that is lacking either in euphony or in moral meaning. It is a sin for you to call your child Jehoiakim or Tiglath-Pileser. Because you yourself may have an exasperating name is no reason why you should give it to those who come after you. But how often we have seen some name, filled with jargon, rattling down from generation to generation, simply because some one a long while ago happened to be afflicted with it. Institutions and enterprises have sometimes without sufficient deliberation taken their nomenclature. Mighty destinies have been decided by the significance of a name. There are men who all their life long toil and tussle to get over the influence of some unfortunate name. While we may, through right behaviour and Christian demeanour, outlive the fact that we were baptized by the name of a despot, or an infidel, or a cheat, how much better it would have been if we all could have started life without any such encumbrance. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *The preciousness of the name of Jesus*:—Years ago a French soldier who loved Napoleon was undergoing an operation, and as the surgeon pressed the probe far into his lungs to feel for the bullet that lay there, a ghastly smile came over his face. "A little deeper," said he, "and you will find the emperor!" And oh! I tell you Christ has had thousands of followers, who have had His name

written in their inmost hearts, deeper than all other names, and thoughts, and memories—deeper than life, and death, and heaven—deeper than all, for ever ! (*Ibid.*) *A Name above every name* :—And in now seeking to vindicate the applicability of this remarkable language to our blessed Saviour, I would at once ask you to observe that in a certain aspect there could scarcely have been a career that seemed less likely to secure future pre-eminence than just the earthly career of Christ Jesus. He was cradled in a manger. He probably did live a life of toil as a village carpenter. He certainly spent His youth in a town whose special characteristics were ignorance and vice. And when He became a man and emerged from His village home into the cities of Palestine, He was opposed by all the accredited leaders of the people. I must proceed to say that all this pre-eminence of Christ Jesus is most natural, and, indeed, most necessary. Just as no one marvels why the name of Newton or Watt or Jenner or Simpson is ever held by us in most respectful remembrance, so no one who thinks carefully needs wonder that countless thousands hail with delight the name Jesus, and declare that this name is all their boast. For, apart altogether from anything supernatural about our blessed Saviour—regarding Him, that is, simply in the character of a mere man—what elements of true greatness were wanting in this Son of the Virgin Mary? what powers and characteristics are there which evoke men's love and applause, which secure respect and reverence and esteem, which were wanting in Him who is the Captain of our salvation? Nay, but what is there which acts as a magnet upon men which was not possessed with peculiar intensity by Him of whom the Father declared—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? As we all know, wisdom usually secures ascendancy among men. We regard Platos and Bacons as our mental kings—as real intellectual giants amongst us. But if so, how could Jesus of Nazareth occupy any other than the front rank among men? how could He be anywhere else than in "the midst" as the centre of attraction—the exemplar man? His is the very wisdom of the Deity. Most naturally, therefore, does the name of Jesus secure pre-eminence. And while wisdom has ever been an attractive power among men, so also we know that goodness invariably secures respect and esteem for those who have it. Benevolence, indeed, rules our hearts as if with prescriptive right; and self-sacrifice for the good of others evokes the plaudits of all thoughtful persons. No doubt there are times at which this is not so. In days in which an all-wise God gives men over to the open practice of sin, all respect for goodness and virtue, for the virtuous and good, is abandoned. But if all these things are so, how could the name of Jesus—the name of the pure, compassionate, self-denying One—the name of Him who literally died for the sons of men—but become a name which is above every name? It would have been an insult to the common-sense of mankind had the world extolled, as it does, the virtues of an Augustine, a Pascal, an À Kempis, or a Vicars—had men talked as they do of the comparatively flickering torches of holiness which were waved abroad by such pious souls—and yet left unnoticed the great Sun of righteousness, Jesus Christ our Lord. Unquestionably, then, the pre-eminence of Christ's name is a natural pre-eminence. He reigns because He has a right to reign, because He possesses, as none other ever did, all those qualities, all those excellences, all those magnetic influences by means of which hearts are enthralled and minds made submissive. (*W. L. Ker, M.A.*)

Vers. 10–11. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.—*Bowing at the name of Jesus* :—I. TO WHAT PERIOD DOES THE ASSERTION REFER. 1. Not the present, which would not be the fact, and besides the text is a prophecy. Many objects are now worshipped: riches, pleasure, &c. 2. At the judgment, when every usurper will be dethroned, and every rebel crushed. II. THE PERSONS ALLUDED TO. 1. His willing and devoted servants. 2. Others will bow unwillingly. III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS EVENT. Jesus will reign with undisputed sway. 1. Sin will be banished from His dominions. 2. There will be no more contention. 3. There will be no more weakness or sorrow. 4. There will be no more fear of death. (*W. H. Davison.*) *The supremacy of Christ* :—I. IS UNIVERSAL. 1. In heaven and on earth. 2. In the control of providence and grace. 3. In the administration of mercy and judgment. II. MUST BE UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED. 1. By His enemies as by His friends. 2. To this end He is exalted at the right hand of God. III. SECURES THE GLORY OF GOD. 1. In the accomplishment of His purpose. 2. The revelation of His character. 3. The completion of His kingdom. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christ's claims* :—I. THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST UPON

our faith; submission; obedience; love. II. HIS POWER TO ENFORCE THEM. He is exalted; as Lord of all. III. THE CERTAINTY OF THEIR FINAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT. Every knee shall bow, &c.; to the glory of God the Father. (*Ibid.*)

The triumphs of Christ :—Before many a Popish shrine on the continent one sees exhibited a great variety of crutches, together with wax models of arms, legs, and other limbs. These are supposed to represent the cures wrought by devotion at that altar; the memorials of the healing power of the saint. Poor miserable superstition all of it, and yet what a reminder to the believer in Jesus as to his duty and his privilege! Having pleaded at the feet of Jesus, we have found salvation; have we remembered to record this wonder of His hand? If we hung up memorials of all His matchless grace, what crutches, and bandages, and trophies of every sort should we pile together! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

The Supreme King :—At a missionary meeting on the Island of Baratonga, in the Pacific Ocean, an old man, who wished to join the Church, rose and said, "I have lived during the reign of four kings. In the first we were continually at war, and a fearful season it was watching and hiding with fear. During the reign of the second we were overtaken with a severe famine, and all expected to perish; then we ate rats and grass and this wood and that wood. During the third we were conquered, and became the peck and prey of the two other settlements of the island; then if a man went to fish he rarely ever returned, or if a woman went far away to fetch food she was rarely ever seen again. But during the reign of this third king we were visited by another King, a great King, a good King, a peaceful King, a King of love, Jesus, the Lord from heaven. He has gained the victory. He has conquered our hearts; therefore we now have peace and plenty in this world, and hope soon to dwell with Him in heaven." (*R. Brewin.*)

Christ must be confessed :—Victorinus, a teacher of rhetoric at Rome, was in his old age converted to Christianity, and came to Simplicianus, one eminent at that time for his piety, whispering in his ear softly these words, "I am a Christian;" but this holy man answered, "I will not believe it, nor count thee so, till I see thee among the Christians in the church," at which he laughed, saying, "Do then those walls make a Christian? cannot I be such except I openly profess it, and let the world know the same?" This he said for fear, being yet but a young convert, though an old man; but some time after, when he was more confirmed in the faith, and had seriously considered that if he should continue thus ashamed of Christ, He would be ashamed of him at last, he changed his purpose, and came to Simplicianus, saying, "Let us go to the church, I will now in earnest be a Christian." And there he made an open confession, observing that "as he had openly professed rhetoric, which was not essential to salvation, he ought not to be afraid to own the Word of God in the congregation of the faithful." (*W. H. Baxendale.*)

We must speak for Christ :—Of one of the statues in the Campanile, Florence, it is said that Donatello, when giving it the last stroke of his chisel, exclaimed, in enthusiastic admiration, "Speak!" So Christ, when He calls men from their sins and re-creates them in His own image, says, "Tell what things God hath done for you." (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 12-18. Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed.—I. THE WORK.

1. Work out your own salvation. 2. In conformity with apostolic teaching. 3. Under all circumstances. II. THE MEANS. 1. Divine power. 2. Personally and solicitously applied. 3. In the spirit of contentment and peace. III. THE END. 1. That ye may be blameless, sons of God. 2. Shedding light on a dark world. 3. Multiplying the joy of the Church both here and hereafter. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

The obedience of the Christian life :—I. THE OBEDIENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS THE WORKING OUT OF SALVATION. 1. In relation to God. The absolute power of God's will, which is the law to every creature and the accepted law to the Christian, is regarded as expressing itself within the heart of man. (1) "Worketh in you" is used elsewhere of that internal energy of God which is the spring of all other energy (1 Cor. xii. 6; Eph. i. 11). But here it is the spiritual volition alone that is meant, that special influence of God upon the will and act of man in the things which pertain to the Divine good pleasure. (2) "His good pleasure" imparts to "worketh in us" a character of love and perfect freedom that must never be lost sight of in our consideration of God's working on the human heart. His influences are not mechanical and unbending, working out a pre-determined law of election, but pre-spontaneous and springing from the heart. God can study and adapt Himself to His creature's freedom. In the profound mystery of our co-operation with Divine grace it is our own will and act while it is God's. The obedience of

the Christian to the law within Him is perfect freedom. 2. In regard to the service it performs. (1) The object of this service is personal salvation. We are to imitate the obedience of Christ in the utmost possible care of our own souls, as if our salvation were the very service of our covenant with God. But lest this should be carried to a morbid excess the apostle adds the other lessons on self in this chapter and elsewhere. (2) Does the apostle mean by the peculiar stress He lays on "your own" that whatever God's inward working may mean, the accomplishment in result must be the working out on man's part of an actual salvation? Or does He refer to the Redeemer's intervention, and indirectly bid them remember that His obedience has not rendered theirs superfluous? Or "As ye obeyed in My presence when I could give you My aid, &c., so remember that neither My presence nor My absence was vital to your interests?" We may mingle all these meanings. Every Christian must make His own soul's salvation His personal care, and not so to rely upon Divine grace, atoning redemption, or human ministry as to neglect his own persevering sedulity. 3. In regard to its spirit. "Fear and trembling" is divested of the stern and depressing character it wears in the Old Testament. In the New it is always used in connection with obedience, and always to signify vehement eagerness to do well (2 Cor. vii. 1). There is here no idea of trembling apprehension of the future, nor anything but the humble alacrity that vibrates with eager desire to obey.

II. SALVATION MUST BE WROUGHT OUT IN THE MIDST OF AN EVIL WORLD. In "fear and trembling" before God, and "without murmurings," &c., and "before men." They are to yield obedience to three great laws. 1. The law of dignity. (1) They are children of God; (2) in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; (3) therefore they are to maintain their dignity. 2. The law of the preservation of purity. The force of the exhortation arises from the fact that as "lights" they are seen, and that "in the midst of the perverse nation they are to let their influences be felt." (1) As the children of God in their aspect towards the world are commanded to use their liberty of action so as to avoid sin in act, here they are commanded to abstain from receiving the principle of it again in their nature. This is the liberty of the children of God to keep themselves unspotted from the world. (2) But the word "harmless" seems rather to mean "become" than be pure. There is a process of purification that implies the admixture of something of the world's evil still remaining. Surely this is verified by the experience of every one of us. The provision, however, is ample for the entire cleansing of the soul. 3. The law of a pure exhibition of character for the world's teaching and example. God has placed His people in the world to be to it what the luminaries are in nature. And of this the reason is: because ye hold in yourselves the Word which is the light of life. (W. B. Pope, D.D.) *Divine help*:—The method of grace is the method of nature likewise. There is a profusion of plastic elements and forces, but man must plough the soil, sow, reap, and prepare his food for the table; combine them, build the house, capital, palace, cathedral; fashion the ship, map the seas and stars, use the compass, and guide the rudder; discover the laws of matter, invent the engine, and girdle the earth with rail and wire. (A. H. Moment, D.D.)

Working out our own salvation:—I. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THIS GREAT WORK IS TO BE PURSUED. 1. What will come of any work we undertake largely depends on the "spirit" in which we undertake it. We may enter upon it half-heartedly, or as something merely secondary. But our salvation is to be the principal thing to us; and working it out is to be thorough. 2. Wise cautiousness. "Fear and trembling." This is not nervous dread, nor timorous quaking, but a keen and ceaseless outlook considering foes and temptations; a self-distrust that sharpens vigilance; a recognition of danger and preparedness to meet it. 3. Cheerfulness—"without murmurings." The work we do cheerfully brings its own blessing. Do not, then, do it in a grudging, complaining spirit; and this, not only in doing but in bearing. 4. Hopefulness—"without disputings," not with men but with God. Distrust of God will sap our sources of strength. Work out with unquestioning trust in God's wisdom, goodness, and power. 5. Becomingness, in view of their relationship. They are "the sons of God," they must live as God's sons—holy, loving, &c. Their lineage should show itself in their spirit. II. THE INCENTIVES TO THIS COURSE OF CONDUCT. 1. Consistency. The work is begun and ought in consistency to be finished. Men plead consistency as an argument for a bad course, as Herod in the case of John the Baptist; much more should Christians for a good one. 2. God's help. In working out our salvation we are not left to our own unaided powers. Because we have effectual help let us be thorough, &c., in this. 3. Responsibility—"lights in

the world." Be then as the lighthouse and the star. 4. Personal relations. They are the apostle's spiritual children. (*J. J. Goadby.*)

Vers. 12-13. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.—Here is—I. HOPE for all. II. HELP for all. III. WORK for all. IV. A KIND WORD for all. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Salvation*:—I. IS YOUR OWN CONCERN. 1. Others may be solicitous about you. 2. You must bear the responsibility. II. DEMANDS EFFORT. 1. It is not of works. 2. Yet it must be worked out. III. MUST BE ANXIOUSLY PROSECUTED. 1. With peaceful confidence in God. 2. Yet with fear and trembling. (*Ibid.*) *The way of salvation*:—I. THE INVALUABLE BLESSING SET BEFORE US. 1. The blessing itself—Salvation. What is that? Deliverance from sin. Had there been no sin there would have needed no salvation. But having sinned man has lost likeness to God, love for God, life with God, and he wants these restored. But he cannot get them back of himself. Christ, however, has secured them for him; deliverance (1) from the curse of sin. Christ has taken this upon Himself (Rom. viii. 1). (2) From the dominion of sin. That is made the slave which all along has been the master. (3) From all the consequences of sin. (a) Separation from God. Being saved from sin man has access to God. (b) Eternal punishment. 2. Your interest in this salvation. You hear people say, "That is my own house, my own business," and lay great emphasis on the "own." And your own salvation has a peculiar emphasis connected with it. Christ's salvation is a common salvation, and you do well to publish it; but what if heathens should possess it, and you through the want of it be lost. II. THE MEANS OF ITS ATTAINMENT. "Work out," &c. 1. Negatively: this does not mean—(1) To make an atonement for sin. Salvation in that respect is finished. (2) That you are saved through your work. There is no more merit in it than there is in receiving alms from a benefactor. 2. Positively; it is—(1) To labour to believe, and receive salvation—by reading, hearing, meditation, &c. (2) To labour to secure the enjoyment of salvation. Many have it, but not the joy of it. This is secured by prayer and Christian work. (3) Labour to exhibit and practise salvation. You cannot hold the world and sin in one hand, and salvation in the other. III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO USE THE MEANS PRESCRIBED. Do not say, trembling soul, thou hast no strength, "I would work, but am so feeble." Thy helper is God. 1. He works "to will." He does not re-form the natural faculty of the will; but sweetly and powerfully constrains that will by His Holy Spirit. 2. He works "to do." Sometimes you have the will but not the strength. But as God works in us principles of action—faith, love, and regard for His glory—so when these principles are quickened and brought into practice, what cannot a man do? (*J. Sherman.*) *Your own salvation*:—Hearers often allege that preachers deal with subjects in which they have no interest, or with unpractical themes or with mysterious dogmas. No such charge can be preferred against this. I. THE MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION. Salvation; which contains within it deliverance—1. From the guilt of our past sins. This is a matter of grave consideration. (1) God thinks so, or He would not have sent His Son and His Spirit. (2) The Church thinks so, or earnest men and women would not make such sacrifices to bring men to this salvation. (3) The angels think so, or there would not be joy in their presence at sinners repenting. (4) The devils and lost spirits think so, or the one would not endeavour to thwart salvation, nor the others (as Dives) long so ardently for the salvation of their living brethren. Nothing so much concerns any one as this. (1) What is it to have a healthy body if you have a perishing soul? (2) What is wealth if that which is more precious than the whole world be lost? (3) What are honour and reputation if we have to hear, "Depart from Me." II. WHOSE MATTER IS IT? "Your own." 1. The sin you commit is your own and its condemnation. You may share in other men's sins and they in yours; but a burden lies on you which no one can touch. You must obtain it, for this a personal pardon, or you are undone for ever. You must yourself repent, believe, &c. 2. You must personally die, and in that dying we shall have either personal comfort or personal dismay. When death is past, salvation is still "our own." There is a personal heaven for a personal believer. But if you have it not, it will be your own damnation. No one will be condemned for you. A substitute there is now, but not then. 3. You may be tempted to forget your own salvation by thoughts of other people. Reverse the process. (1) Members of the Church. (2) Official Christians. 3. Unpractical doctrinists. (4) Speculatists. (5) Critics. (6) Those who have espoused great public designs. Protestant controversialists, reformers, &c. III. ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS. 1. "Is

it not all fixed? Don't you believe in predestination? What have we then to do with our own salvation?" Is it not fixed whether you shall be nourished with food to-day or shall go hungry? Why then will you go home and eat your dinner? You do not reason so wickedly and foolishly about any other subject but this. 2. Do you not believe in full assurance? Yes, but presumption is not assurance, and the most fully assured are those who are most careful about their own salvation.

3. "This is very selfish." Yes, but it is a selfishness that is needful before you can be unselfish. How can you be of any service to others if you are not saved yourself. IV. RENDER SOME ASSISTANCE. Ask yourself, "Am I saved?" 1. Does God work in you? Have you a work of the Holy Spirit in your soul? If so, you are saved. 2. Does your salvation rest wholly on Christ? If you are hanging on anything but the Cross you are deceived. 3. Have you turned your back on sin? 4. If not, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," &c. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

The working out of salvation:—Salvation is founded on the mediation of Christ, but it is perfected by personal co-operation. This is your own salvation, because—I. IT MUST BE WROUGHT OUT IN YOURSELF. It must have all the distinctiveness which pertains to individuality of character. 1. Its sphere is in the man. Christianity is not an outward application, but an inward work; not rites, &c., but life. 2. It is marked by attributes so distinct as to isolate it and make it our own. Every man has his own infirmities, and hence the work of grace differs in individuals. II. IT MUST BE BROUGHT OUT BY YOURSELF. The necessity of Divine influence is assumed—"It is God that worketh in you." We cannot be too deeply conscious of our entire dependence; but we cannot be too much alive to our personal obligations. The latter will be the basis of the judgment. The ministry of the Word, &c., are highly important; but they must not be substitutes for personal Christianity. III. IT MUST BE WROUGHT OUT FOR YOURSELF. Every Christian is now shaping the character of his salvation in the world to come where "every one will receive," &c. (J. E. M. A.)

The working out of salvation:—I. THE SALVATION WHICH IS TO BE WROUGHT OUT. "Salvation" has two senses—deliverance, and a being raised to that state of holiness and happiness which God designs. In the text it includes both. Salvation was not finished on the cross. It was not even secured; since something depends upon our own act. Salvation is a process. The first step is deliverance from blindness and insensibility; the second, from condemnation. Our salvation, then, proceeds into a state of entire conformity to the mind of Christ. Yet it supposes growth, even then. It is also preservation, every moment, from temptation, sloth, neglect, impatience, until at death the pure spirit is committed into the hands of the Father, and enters upon the perfect happiness of heaven. II. THE MANNER IN WHICH IT IS TO BE WROUGHT OUT. 1. "Work" denotes a vigorous application of the mind to—(1) Serious thoughts. (2) Prayerful exercises of faith. (3) The government of the heart. (4) The resistance of temptation. (5) The means of grace. (6) Practical religion. 2. Salvation is to be worked out. By repentance and faith till justification and sanctification are secured. Our daily contests and attainments must be prosecuted till the conqueror be crowned. 3. With fear and trembling. Beware of the treachery of the heart. The number who have fallen; the immense stake at issue; the frown of God. III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT. 1. This settles the disputed point of Divine help and human agency; not philosophically but practically. God does not so work in man as to render him a mechanical instrument; nor does man so work as that the work is attributed to his own powers. 1. A great part of the controversy respecting free-will arises from not distinguishing between a power to will and the act of willing. That such a distinction is just, appears most clearly from God's working in us "to do." Now, it were absurd to say, God "does," that is, prays, watches, and believes, for us; but He gives the power. It were equally absurd to say, God "wills" for us; but He gives the power to will; for He restores free-agency. Again: If God necessitated our doing, He would not "work in us to do," but *by* us to do; so, if He necessitated our will, he would work, not "*in* us to will," but *by* us to will. The sense is, that He works in us that we may ourselves will and do. 2. God works in us to will. Several operations are necessary here. He enlightens the mind; impresses upon us the things that belong to our peace; and sets before us the motives which persuade the will. This, however, is not power to do. "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." God strengthens us by the rich effusions of His blessed Spirit. He does not convey all power at once. Some degree of it is given, independently of ourselves. Afterwards, the power is

increased according to our diligence, and faith, and improvement. What, then, is there that you cannot attain? "God worketh in you." 3. Do you doubt of (1) Your attaining to saving faith? "God worketh in you;" and His grace is sufficient. (2) Your attaining power over sin? "God worketh in you;" and is anything too hard for Him? (3) Your gaining complete salvation? "God worketh in you;" and His almighty Spirit can sanctify the most corrupt and depraved nature. (4) Your victory over trouble and conflict? Fear not: "God worketh in you;" and His strength shall be so made perfect in your weakness, that you shall be even "more than conquerors." Conclusion: 1. If you neglect your proper work, think not to blame God. He has both given and offered power. 2. If you have it not, you have not asked, or have not employed it. 3. In proportion as you are strengthened, you act. Live, then, near to God. 4. The glory of salvation is the Lord's. You do nothing but in His power. (*R. Watson.*)

The working out of salvation:—"Wherefore" links this passage to the whole picture from ver. 6 to ver. 11. Since the mind of Christ is revealed in His incarnation and death and is set before you as an example, work out, &c. Every Christian duty finds its motive and model in Christ. This counsel—I. IMPLIES—1. That something has been already done. The very phrase 'work out' implies this. Salvation has been begun, and is in one sense, a complete thing. We have not to work for salvation, but to accept it. 2. That something more has to be done. The new life has been created, but it must grow or it will die. What is more beautiful than the fervour and rapture of the first love, when young hearts turn to the Saviour as flowers to the light and find in Him their rest and their joy? But this first love may be forsaken. Character having greatly improved may deteriorate, and spiritual health may suffer a relapse. So we are reminded that we must not be merely passive in religion, receiving impressions, drinking in comfort, stimulated from without, but also to be active, cultivating our own powers. II. THIS SALVATION IS OUR OWN. Something essentially individual between each man and his God. In a sense it is the same in all, and yet it is different. God does not mean your nature to be a copy of any other. One man is impulsive, another is calm; one is bright, another gloomy; one is brave, another like a sensitive plant shrinking from even the breath of opposition. The experience of the gaoler was different from that of Lydia. So it is your own salvation and no one can work it out for you. The battlefield is your own soul, you have to pass through the great crisis of life alone, and you have to die alone. III. HOW ARE WE TO WORK IT OUT? 1. By the acquisition of spiritual truth. It is possible to have our Father's phrases on our lips when we have not the power which lay behind them in our hearts. We are thankful for the wisdom and piety of the past, but a traditional faith will not save us; and while it is unwise to break away from the past, it is unequally unwise to reject the new truth that may be revealed to us. There will then be progress in character. The spiritual truth thus acquired will be the food of the soul. 2. By resolute effort. A man can never become wise or good without trouble. Jesus bids us "strive," and Paul to "fight the good fight," &c. It is not an easy thing to live the Christian life. The religion of sentimentalism, emotion, ritual, may be easy, but the religion of principle means cross-bearing and earnest conflict with sin. 3. Even in the absence of means which are important. The presence of the apostle was a help. There is something in the presence of a friend which cannot be written with ink. The Philippians had done well in the apostle's presence; they were to do much more in his absence. Why? To comfort him. As children when their father is from home are taking more care than usual that the windows and doors are properly fastened, so the Christians of Philippi were to be doubly vigilant when Paul was away. External aids are precious, but we must learn to be independent of them when necessary. IV. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH WE ARE TO DO THE WORK—"with fear and trembling." This Epistle is full of joy; but it is the joy of a reverent and earnest soul. There is abundant reason for caution, self-distrust, modesty, and humility, since so many have fallen, so many Peters denied their Lord, so many Demases forsaken Him. "Be not high-minded, but fear." (*James Owen.*)

The working out of salvation:—I. A CHRISTIAN MAN HAS HIS WHOLE SALVATION ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED FOR HIM IN CHRIST, AND YET HE HAS TO WORK IT OUT. Notice—1. The persons to whom these words are addressed. Through applying them to non-Christians they have been perverted to mean: "You co-operate with Christ in the great work of salvation, and you will get grace and pardon." But none save Christians have

anything to do with them. They are addressed to those who are already resting on the finished salvation of Jesus Christ. If you have not done so, and are applying them to yourselves, remember that when the Jews came to Christ in a similar spirit, asking Him, "What shall we do?" &c. He said, "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." The first lesson is not work but faith, and unless there be faith no work. 2. But if salvation be this, How can we work it out? Salvation has four aspects. It means—(1) The whole process by which we are delivered from sin, and set safe on the right hand of God. (2) Deliverance from the guilt, punishment, and condemnation of sin, in which it is a thing past. (3) The gradual process of deliverance from its power in our own hearts, in which it is a thing present. (4) The final and perfect deliverance, in which it is a thing future. These all come equally from Christ, and depend upon His work and power, and are all given in the first act of faith. But the attitude in which the Christian stands to the accomplished salvation, and that in which He stands to the progressive salvation are different. He has to take the finished blessing. Yet the salvation which means our being delivered from the evil in our hearts is ours on the condition of continuous faithful reception and daily effort. 3. The two things, then, are not inconsistent. Work as well as believe, and in the daily subjugation of your spirits to His Divine power; in the daily crucifixion of your flesh; in the daily straining after loftier heights of godliness and purer atmospheres of devotion and love, make more thoroughly your own what you possess, work into the substance of your souls what you have. II. GOD WORKS ALL IN US, AND YET WE HAVE TO WORK. Command implies power; command and power imply duty. 1. Is there any cautious guarding of the words that they may not seem to clash with the other side of truth? No. Paul does not say, "Yet" God worketh in you, or "although," or "remember as a caution." He blends the two together in an altogether different connection, and sees no contradiction or puzzle, but a ground of encouragement—"for" God worketh in you. That expresses more than bringing outward means to bear. It speaks of an inward, real, and efficacious operation. God puts in you the first faint motions of a better will. It is not that God gives men the power and leaves them to use it; that the desire and purpose come from Him, and are left with us as faithful or unfaithful stewards. The whole process, from the first sowing of the seed until its last fruiting in action, is God's altogether. 2. And none the less strongly does He teach by His earnest injunction that human control over the human will and that reality of human agency, which are often thought to be annihilated by the view of God as originating all good. The apostle thought this doctrine did not absorb all our individuality in one great cause, which made men mere tools and puppets. His conclusion is God does all, therefore you work. 3. Each of these truths rests on its own appropriate evidence. My own consciousness tells me that I am free, that I have power, that I am therefore responsible. I know what I mean by the will of God, because I am myself conscious of a will. The power of God is an object of intelligent thought to me because I am conscious of power. On the other hand, that belief in God, which is one of the deep and universal beliefs of men, contains in it the belief in Him as the source of all power, who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. These two convictions are both given us in the primitive beliefs which belong to us all. These two mighty pillars, on which all morality and all religion repose, have their foundations deep down in our nature, and tower up beyond our sight. They seem to stand opposite each other, but it is only as the piers of some tall arch are opposed. Beneath they repose on one foundation, above they spring together in the completing keystone, and bear the whole steady structure. Wise and good men have toiled to harmonize them in vain. Perhaps the time may come when we shall be lifted high enough to see the binding arch, but here on earth we can only behold the shafts on either side. Any fancied reconciliation only consists in parring down one-half of the full-orbed truth to nothing, or admitting it in words, while every principle of the reconciler's system demands its denial. Each antagonist is strong in his assertions, and weak in his denials. 4. This apparent incompatibility is no reason for rejecting truths, each commended to our acceptance on their own proper grounds. The Bible admits and enforces both. God is all, but thou canst work. Take this belief that God worketh all in you as the ground of your confidence. Take this conviction that thou canst work for the spur and stimulus of your life. III. THE CHRISTIAN HAS HIS SALVATION SECURED, AND YET HE IS TO FEAR AND TREMBLE. You may say, "Perfect love casteth out fear." So it does: the fear that hath torment. But there is another fear and trembling

which is but another shape of confidence and calm hope. Scripture does tell us that the believing man's salvation is certain since he believes. And your faith can be worth nothing unless it have trembling distrust of your own power, which is the companion of all thankful and faithful reception of God's mercy. Let, then, all fear and trembling be yours as a man; let all confidence and calm trust be yours as a child of God. Turn your confidence and your fears alike into prayer. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The working out of salvation*:—This work is a work—I. IN YOUR OWN HEART. To obey inwardly; to cherish and cultivate the good feelings which are now in you; to discipline your thoughts, rule your temper, keep your heart in order; to form right habits of daily life; to struggle against your besetting sin; to maintain a Christian spirit. II. IN THE CLOSET. Every one knows how difficult it is to fulfil faithfully the duties of private prayer, self-examination, and meditation; and to maintain the habit regularly, and to do it spiritually. To get rid of wandering thoughts; not to slide into reverie. To use form without formality. To make his own room a sanctuary, which he never leaves without carrying from it a holier frame and a higher aim. III. IN YOUR OWN SPHERE. In the family and in business. IV. IN THE WORK OUTSIDE. No Christian should be without some definite form of Christian work. It may be among the poor, with the sick, or in the Sunday school, &c. In so doing you are working out the salvation you have received. Conclusion: Have you been saved? Then save! Are you loved? Then love! Are you happy? Then make others happy! (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The working out of salvation*:—Note—I. THAT GREAT AND IMPORTANT TRUTH WHICH OUGHT NEVER TO BE OUT OF OUR REMEMBRANCE. "It is God that worketh in us," &c., *i.e.*, "It is of His good pleasure," &c. This removes all imagination of merit from man, and gives God the whole glory of His work. The expression means either—1. "To will," including the whole of inward; "to do," the whole of outward religion. 2. "To will," implying every good desire; "to do," whatever results therefrom, *i.e.*, God worketh all inward and outward holiness, or God breathes every good desire and brings it to good effect. The original seems to favour the latter; but either is destructive of pride. II. IF GOD WORKETH IN YOU THEN WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION. "Work out" implies the doing of a thing thoroughly; "your own," you must do it or it will be left undone for ever. 1. Salvation (1) begins with preventing grace, including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning His will. (2) Is carried on by convincing grace or repentance, which brings a larger amount of self-knowledge, &c. (3) Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation, whereby through grace we are saved by faith, consisting of two branches. (a) Justification, by which we are saved from the guilt of sin and restored to God's favour, which is instantaneous. (b) Sanctification, by which we are saved from the power and root of sin and restored to the Divine image, and which begins the moment we are justified, and gradually increases till the heart is cleansed from all sin, and filled with pure love to God and man. 2. How are we to work out this salvation? This is explained by that other passage in which Paul exhorts servants to obey their masters according to the flesh, "with fear and trembling," a proverbial expression which cannot be understood literally. For what master could bear, much less require, his servant to stand quaking before him? And the words following utterly exclude this meaning (Eph. vi. 5, &c.). They imply—(1) That everything be done with the utmost earnestness of spirit, and with all care and diligence, perhaps in reference to the former word "fear." (2) With the utmost speed, punctuality, exactness, referring to "trembling." Transfer this to the working out of our salvation. With the same temper and manner that Christians serve their earthly masters, so let Christians serve their heavenly master. 3. What are the steps in this working? (1) Cease to do evil—fly from all sin, abstain from every appearance of evil. (2) Learn to do well—use family and private prayer, search the Scriptures, do good unto all men; and herein "be ye steadfast, unmoveable," &c., and so go on to perfection. III. WHAT CONNECTION IS THERE BETWEEN THE FORMER AND LATTER PART OF THIS SENTENCE? Is there not a flat opposition? If God worketh in us, is not our working impracticable and unnecessary? No. 1. God worketh in you, therefore you can work; otherwise it would be impossible. We know that the word is absolutely true, "Without Me ye can do nothing;" but it is equally true that "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." 2. God worketh in you, therefore you must work. You must be workers together in Him, or He will cease working. "Unto him that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not"—that

doth not improve the grace already given—"shall be taken away what he assuredly hath." He will not save us unless we "save ourselves from this untoward generation," unless we labour to "make our calling and election sure." (*J. Wesley, M.A.*)

The working out of salvation:—I. THE END TO BE ATTAINED. Salvation. 1. Pardon. 2. Sanctification. 3. Eternal life: the whole benefits of redemption. II. THIS END IS ONLY TO BE ATTAINED BY WORKING. This teaches—1. Negatively (1) That it is not a matter of course that men are saved, because Christ has purchased redemption for them. (2) That salvation is not a benefit which others can confer upon us. Each one must work out his own. No priest can save us. (3) This is not an easy work. *Κατεργάζεσθε* is a strong word, and this working is to be with fear and trembling, *i.e.*, with solicitude, lest after all we should fail. Our utmost exertion therefore is required. "Strive to enter," &c. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." Israel, to gain possession of Canaan, had to fight long and hard. No cross, no crown. 2. Positively. (1) Our working must be directed to a right end, not to make atonement or merit salvation by our good works. These are the two errors of all false religions, and men who labour in this direction make no progress. The proper course is to obtain an interest in Christ, and to bring our hearts and lives into conformity with the will of God. If a man thinks it enough to believe in Christ and then live as he pleases, he turns the grace of God into licentiousness. We have to subdue the world, the flesh, and the devil. (2) We must work in accordance with the gospel. Therefore our work must recognize—(a) The work of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. (b) The work of the Holy Ghost. (c) The efficacy of the means of grace, none of which are to be neglected. (3) It must be assiduous and laborious. III. THE ENCOURAGEMENTS. 1. That God can, does, and will aid us. 2. That this aid is not merely outward, giving us the means and opportunity, but inward and efficacious, giving us strength and will. 3. There is, therefore, a divine consensus, a co-operation promised, analogous to the working of God in nature, and in those cases in which He gave strength to the palsied or the lame. 4. This Divine co-operation is congruous to the nature of the soul. 5. As it is absolutely necessary it should be sought and relied on. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*)

The working out of salvation:—I. MAN'S PART IN SALVATION—*i.e.*, the Christian man's, for the unregenerate have no spiritual germ to work out. We must work energetically—"energize, for it is God who energizes in you." We must act as though everything depended on our own personal efforts. This includes—1. Untiring diligence, improving every moment; making the best use of every opportunity. 2. Thoroughness, wholeness. Half work will not do (1 Thess. v. 23). Mind, heart, body. 3. Fortitude. We must work undaunted by difficulty (Acts xx. 23-24). 4. With fear and trembling (Eph. vi. 5). The fear that is begotten by the anxiety to please. II. GOD'S PART. 1. "God worketh," which supplies—(1) The motive. The good we do is not our own but God's. The light is not in the window; that is simply the medium through which light passes. The coal burns and throws off light and heat because the sun worked its light and warmth into it thousands of years ago. (2) The power. He who created the heavens, established the rocks, painted the landscape with beauty, works in us; let us, therefore, though Paul and the whole brotherhood of ministers be absent, fail not. (3) The reason. God works in, therefore we should work out. 2. How does God work? (1) In the tree by air, light, heat, rain, and dew, and the tree works out in wood, leaves, and fragrant blossoms. (2) In man by means of His truth, Spirit, and grace, and we work them out in love, joy, &c. (Gal. v. 22-23). 3. God works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. He does this that He may accomplish His gracious purpose in the salvation of mankind—"for God willeth all men to be saved." (*D. R. Jenkins.*)

Salvation worked out:—I. WHAT IS SUPPOSED IN THE COMMAND. 1. That we, while in our natural state, are lost creatures, liable to perish for ever. Our being bid to work out our salvation, supposing this to be our antecedent condition, may well keep us humble as long as we live. 2. That there is a way open by which we may be delivered from that condition, for we had never been enjoined thus had we been doomed to perish (vers. 6-8; John iii. 16). 3. That God is very desirous of their salvation to whom this command is sent (2 Pet. iii. 9; Ezek. xxxiii. 11). II. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE SALVATION WE ARE TO WORK OUT. Considering ourselves—1. As fallen creatures, our first work is to get our state changed, and not to rest satisfied till we are restored to the favour and image of God. Here our salvation in the application of it begins. And with what earnestness should it be laboured after by every one who loves his safety. 2. In a

state of grace, but as yet imperfect in attainments. The work of our salvation includes the mortifying of the remains of our corruption in us, the resisting of temptations, the making additions to grace received, and our pressing on to glory. And how much has a Christian to do, as to all these? (2 Pet. i. 10; Phil. iii. 12-14). 3. As mortal and dying out of the world, the work of salvation includes our preparing for a removal from it, and laying up treasure in another. III. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN BEING BID TO WORK THIS OUT, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH IT IS TO BE DONE. That it is a work—1. In which the soul is to be engaged. Bodily service profiteth nothing alone. 2. In which we are to engage with the greatest intentness. 3. In which the utmost watchfulness is necessary, considering the deceitfulness of the heart, the temptations of Satan, the instances of many who have miscarried. 4. In which the appointed means are to be employed. 5. In which we are to persevere, as he only who endures to the end will be saved. IV. GOD WORKS IN US. 1. It is God who works in us to will and to do. (1) Man is naturally averse to the business of his salvation. How plain is this command and how strongly urged, but how few can be prevailed upon to set about it! (2) When this aversion is overcome it is God that does it. (a) He touches and turns the will, and by His renewing grace brings His people to love and choose what they previously disliked, and thus He of unwilling makes them willing (Ezek. xxxvi. 26). (b) He excites that grace which He implants, and thus both the disposition and the act is owing to influence from heaven (Cant. i. 4). As to His method, usually God—(i.) Opens their souls to their lost and miserable state (John xvi. 8). (ii.) He holds their thoughts close to what is thus discovered as matter of the highest moment, not to be made light of as heretofore. (iii.) By such discovery and view our impression is made upon the conscience, so that the sinner can no longer rest in his present state. (iv.) The awakened sinner is led to importunately inquire what he must do to be saved (Acts ii. 30; xvi. 36). 5. The inquirer is reasonably instructed in the gospel method of salvation (John iii. 16). 6. Salvation being represented as attainable the sinner under Divine influence is led to desire, hope, choose, believe. 2. God works of His good pleasure. (1) 'Tis of His sovereign grace that He works in any; without any constraint or need on His part; without, nay contrary to any merit in ours. (2) In whomsoever God works they are to own it a gracious vouchsafement, one to be highly prized and improved. V. THE FORCE OF THE REASON, FROM SUCH A REPRESENTATION OF THE DIVINE INFLUENCE, TO QUICKEN AND ENGAGE US TO SET ABOUT OUR PART WITH THE UTMOST DILIGENCE. 1. What reason have we from God's working in us to excite ourselves to work out our salvation. It makes it—(1) Reasonable. His hand is stretched out to pluck you as brands from the burning, let it not be overlooked; His presence is vouchsafed to help the soul to heaven, let it not be slighted. (2) Possible. However difficult the work, the Divine worker is working within. (3) Hopeful. What room is there for despondency when God undertakes the design, begins the work, and works on if you do not break off? (4) Delightful. When God draws the believer runs. 2. We are to work because of the manner of God's working, viz., His good pleasure. (1) It is certain that without God's working we can do nothing. (2) Perhaps we long neglected the work, and therefore how justly might the Divine favour have been withdrawn. (3) How much yet remains to be done, and the time allotted is uncertain and short. Application: 1. Behold the folly of sin. 2. See the mercy of God. 3. How unreasonable despair. 4. How inexcusable the finally lost. (*D. Wilcox.*) *Salvation worked out*:—I. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND HERE BY SALVATION? 1. Freedom from our misery. (1) Guilt of sin (Gal. iii. 22; Matt. i. 20). (2) Strength of corruption (Rom. vii. 24; Acts iii. 26). (3) Power of Satan (1 Pet. v. 8). (4) Wrath of God (Psa. viii. 11). (5) Eternal punishment (Matt. xxv. 46; 2 Thess. i. 9). 2. Advancement to happiness: (1) In this life, consisting in God's love to us (Psa. xxx. 5) and our love to Him. (2) In the life to come—consisting in the perfection of our souls (Heb. xii. 23) and in the enjoyment of God (John xvii. 5, 24). II. WHAT BY WORKING OUT? 1. Our making use of all the means appointed by God for this end (Matt. vi. 33). 2. Continuing the use of them until we have attained the end (Acts xiii. 43; Rom. xii. 12). III. WHAT BY FEAR AND TREMBLING? 1. Not with pride (1 John 1-8). 2. Nor presumption (Psa. xix. 13). 3. Nor carnal security (1 Pet. v. 8). 4. But with a holy fear. (1) Lest we should go the wrong way, or make use of the wrong means (Rom. x. 2). (2) Lest we should fail in the use of the right means (Heb. iv. 1). (*Bishop Beveridge.*) *Salvation worked out*:—I. THE ONE GREAT THING WHICH A MAN HATH TO DO IS TO WORK OUT HIS OWN SALVATION. To clear up the nature of this work, consider—1. It is not to be done by the way, but with all

our might (Ecc. ix. 10; 2 Pet. i. 10). 2. All our other works are to be referred to this (1 Cor. x. 31). 3. We cannot do it by our own strength (Jer. x. 23; 2 Cor. iii. 5). Why, then, doth God command us to do it? (1) God's commands show not our ability but duty. (2) God, by His commands, puts us upon doing what we can, depending on Him for the rest. (3) God by His commands enables us to do it (Gen. i. 3; John v. 6, xi. 43; Acts iii. 6). (4) None can enable us to do it but God (ver. 13; 2 Cor. iii. 5). (5) We have no ground to expect strength from God to do it, but through Christ (John xv. 5). (6) We must not do in our own way but God's (Isa. viii. 20). (7) This is the one thing needful (Luke x. 42). (8) It is the most honourable work we can be employed in (Prov. xii. 26). (9) It is not to be begun only but finished (John xvii. 4). II. How doth it appear that this is the work we ought to do? 1. This is the end of our continuance on the earth. 2. God calls on us to do it (Ezek. xxxiii. 11), and commands (Acts xvii. 30). 3. He hath shown us how to do it (Micah vi. 8). 4. He hath offered us the means (Jer. vii. 25). 5. He hath promised to enable us in the use of those means to do it (Matt. xviii. 20). 6. All His providences tend to it (Job xxxvi. 8-10). 7. And so do His ordinances. III. How must we do this work? 1. Begin it (1) with knowledge (1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Isa. i. 7). 2. Repentance; consisting in (1) a sense of sin (John xvi. 8). (a) Original (Psa. li. 5); (b) actual (Psa. li. 3-4); in our thoughts (Gen. vi. 5); affections (2 Tim. iii. 3-4); words (Matt. xii. 36); actions. (c) Habitual (Jer. xiii. 23). (2) A sorrow for sin. (a) Cordial (Joel ii. 13). (b) Universal (Ezek. ix. 4). (c) Exceeding all other sorrow (Zech. xii. 10-11). (3) A hating of sin (Psa. cxxxix. 21-22). (4) A firm resolution against sin (Psa. xvii. 3, cxix. 106). (5) A constant endeavour to perform those resolutions with faith (Acts xvi. 31). (a) Assenting to the Scripture in general (Acts xxiv. 14; 2 Tim. iii. 26), viz., that the assertions are all truths (Heb. vi. 18); that the history is certain; the commands Divine (Rom. vii. 12-14); the promises performed; the threatenings executed. (b) Assenting to the gospel in particular, viz., that Christ is the Son of God; truly man; the promised Messiah; the only Saviour; our meritorious substitute; our prevailing intercessor. (c) Applying these truths to ourselves (James ii. 29); that He is our Lord and God (John xx. 28); our Saviour and Redeemer; our Advocate (Heb. vii. 25; 1 John ii. 1). 2. We must carry on this work—(1) By increasing in knowledge (2 Pet. iii. 18). (2) By renewing our repentance (Psa. xxv. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 9). (3) Renewing acts of faith. (4) Watchfulness over our hearts (Prov. iv. 23). (5) Frequent exercise of our graces. 3. We must finish this work (John xvii. 4). (1) By mortifying all our sins (2 Tim. iv. 7; Rev. iv. 12, 21). (2) Continuing in the performance of all duties (1 Cor. xv. 58; Rev. iii. 11). (3) Persevering in all places (2 Tim. iv. 7). IV. SET UPON THIS WORK. Consider—1. This is the work you came about. 2. You have comfort of no other works (Rom. vi. 21). 3. All other works are sin till this be set about (Prov. xv. 8, xxi. 4, 27; Isa. lxvi. 3). 4. Till this be done, ye are incapable of any mercy (Matt. ii. 2). 5. Subject to all misery—(1) The curse of the law (Gal. iii. 10; Deut. xxviii. 15-16). (2) The wrath of God (Psa. vi. 11). 6. Even in this life this is the best work—(1) Most pleasant (Prov. iii. 17). (a) Here we exercise our best parts (Matt. ix. 29). (b) Set them on their proper objects. (c) Employ them to their proper end. (2) Most honourable (Prov. xii. 26). (a) As the persons we converse with. (b) As to the employment itself. (3) Most profitable. Hereby we attain (a) the most real riches (Prov. xiii. 5; Luke viii. 18). (b) Most satisfying (Isa. lv. 1-2). (c) Most lasting (1 Tim. vi. 17). 7. All the power we have of doing anything was given us to do this. 8. Unless this work is done we are undone for ever (Luke xiii. 3). 9. If this be done, we shall be happy. (1) In our freedom from evil (Rev. xiv. 13). (2) In our enjoyment of all good. V. OBJECTIONS. 1. I have no time. (1) What hast thou any time for but for this? (2) Thou hast time for other things (Eccles. iii. 1, 2). 2. We know not how to do this work. I have told you. 3. It is hard work. (1) It is feasible. (2) It is not hard in itself, but our sins make it so (Matt. xi. 30). (3) Do what you can, and God will enable you to do the rest. (4) Be but willing, and the work is easy (1 John v. 3). (5) Whatsoever pains you take will not be in vain (1 Cor. xv. 58). (6) Heaven will make amends for all. 4. I have done it already. (1) You may be mistaken (Matt. vii. 23; xxv. 11). (2) Howsoever, you cannot do it too well. (3) None have done so much but there is more to do. (a) Hast thou no sin to be repented of (Eccles. vii. 20); (b) no lust to subdue (Rom. vii. 24); (c) no grace to get quickened (Phil. iii. 11, 12). (4) None's work is finished till they die; were it otherwise, God would give you your reward (John

xvii. 4). 5. Time enough hereafter. No, the best time is now (John ix. 4). (*Ibid.*) *Working out what is worked in*:—I. THE MATTER TO BE WORKED OUT. 1. Your own salvation. Charity must begin at home. You ought to spread the truth, but you must first understand it. Ploughing another man's field, don't neglect your own; indicating to another the mote in his eye, do not permit a beam to blind your own. 2. What is to be worked out must first be worked in. An unconverted man can work nothing out, for there is nothing in. You have faith; work it out then; act like a believer; trust God in daily life. Be you Christlike, inasmuch as the Spirit of Christ dwells in you. 3. Salvation is to be worked out. Holiness is salvation. We are not to work out our salvation from the guilt of sin; Christ has done that, but from the power of sin. God has in effect worked that in; He has broken the yoke of sin; it lives and struggles, but it is dethroned, and our life is to keep it down. A man may be saved from the guilt of sin, and yet not saved from the power of pride or bad temper. Your salvation is not complete till you are saved from these. You must fight them till you conquer. II. THE MODEL TO BE WORKED TO. 1. Every artist requires some idea in his mind to which he is to work. The apostle's model is exhibited in the context. (1) Unanimity (ver. 2); (2) humiliation (ver. 3); (3) mutual love; (4) in a word, the mind of Christ (ver. 5). III. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THIS IS TO BE WORKED OUT. 1. An energetic spirit. From the Greek word "work" we get our word energy. The bringing out of the new nature requires this, inasmuch as it is a mark of superlative difficulty. God works in, therefore we must work out. The assistance of Divine grace is not given to put aside our own efforts, but to assist them. 2. With fear to offend so good a God of which we read, Blessed is the man who feareth always. 3. With trembling. Before the Lord we do not tremble with affright, but with holy awe, lest we should sin and grieve the Spirit. IV. THE SWEET ENCOURAGEMENT THE TEXT AFFORDS. Here is—1. Help (1) in an exercise beyond your power. (2) All sufficient for every emergency. (3) Which enables you to receive Divine help. (4) Which shall be more than equal to the power of Satan and all your corruptions. 2. God works in us to will—gives us the desire for holiness, the resolution to put down sin, the stern resolve not to fall into sin again, and He who gave the desire will surely finish it. 3. God does not leave you then; He gives you the power to do, to achieve the victory; therefore fear not. 4. That which He works in you is pleasing in His sight. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Man working and God working*:—I. WE MUST WORK OUT OUR OWN SALVATION. 1. We must be personally active. Salvation cannot be wrought otherwise. 2. This activity must amount to vigorous, sustained working. No excellence anywhere without it. 3. This activity is to be centred on our own salvation. II. GOD WORKETH IN US BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE. 1. As the first clause seems to throw the work wholly on man, this seems to throw it entirely on God. 2. He regulates inclination and action—the motive and the deed. 3. This He does benevolently. III. THE CONSISTENCY OF THESE PROPOSITIONS. Salvation is of God as respects supreme agency, while our part in it is merely instrumental and subordinate. The atonement is the whole ground of our acceptance. God the Holy Spirit works in us, enabling us to believe the gospel, and purifying our heart by faith. He, however, does not work separately from us, nor control and compel. We, too, are occupied. He works by us as well as in us. IV. THE OBLIGATION RESULTING FROM A COLLECTIVE VIEW OF THE CASE TO PROSECUTE THE UNDERTAKING WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING. The propriety of doing so appears—1. From the importance of the work. In small matters men are at ease. There is not enough to engage fully the mind. But no work in its character and issues can compare with this. 2. From the character of the Agent working in us. In conclusion: this subject is (1) encouraging to the timid, (2) stimulating to the torpid. (*D. King, LL.D.*) *Divine influence and man's duty*.—I. THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE INFLUENCE IN THE APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION. The exercise of this influence is—1. Sovereign and free. God's self-existence and independence render it impossible that He should be subject to foreign control, or to any considerations but those that are suggested by His own mind. But His proceedings are not arbitrary or capricious. His reasons are always the wisest, best, and most benevolent. 2. Secret, imperceptible, and only to be discovered by its effect. With what rapidity does He wheel the earth round its axis, and carry it in its annual revolution; and these movements could never have been discovered but by careful observation. When at the approach of spring the fields are arrayed in their beautiful vesture, you cannot see God raising the sap through root and fibre, along stem and branch, and unfolding each bud and blossom. So in salvation.

No shout of angelic hosts announces that God has commenced operations; and though we know there is joy in their presence, we can only see the ground of their joy in individual repentance. While the world is stunning us with its noise, and the Christian labourer may be complaining, "Who hath believed our report?" God may be quietly inspiring multitudes to ask, "What must I do?" &c. 3. Mighty. God's system of operations is no languid series of efforts. The same expression is used with reference to the Divine power which raised Christ from the dead, and which binds all things in the universe to work according to the purpose of His own will. This same power is exerted in our recovery. (1) The obstacles to be surmounted demonstrate this: the mountain of pride and self-righteousness to be laid low; the prejudices to be swept away; the enmity and resistance to be overcome. (2) So do the changes to be effected; the careless are to be made careful; slaves of sin are to be transformed into children of God. Who, then, can hesitate to apply for this succour, and who can despond who has it? 4. In conformity with the principles of our nature. God always adapts His procedure to the nature of the objects on which He works. You may produce considerable alteration by culture, soil, and climate, but you can never change the distinctive properties of one animal or plant for those of another. So in salvation our faculties remain as they were; but we have new aims, inclinations, purposes, and pursuits. (1) God does not alter our absolute dependence upon Him as the creatures of His hand. He may increase our obligations; but from the first step in the narrow way to the last it is, "Not I, but the grace of God." (2) God does not interfere with the freedom He has bestowed, and the consequent responsibility under which we are placed. We find that men exercise great influence over our minds not only by mighty considerations and powerful arguments, but by enlisting our sympathies, and enkindling within us their own ardour. Our minds thereby are strengthened, not enfeebled by the impulse thus given to us. And so God operates with like results. (3) God does not supersede the use of the powers and faculties He has conferred. He does not take our places or work in our stead. There is no promise that He will pray, repent, &c., for us. He worketh in us, affords His gracious protection and omnipotent aid, not to lull our powers into lethargy, but to stir them up to persevering efforts. 5. The tendency and aim of the Divine influence. (1) To will refers to those determinations to which the mind cordially comes after a full consideration of its state in the sight of God and of the overtures of mercy made to it. It is implied that these are full and unwavering; for to will is more than to wish. Many good wishes never proceed further; the will contradicts them all. (2) To do which enables us to reduce determinations to practice. They may be strong and firm, and yet delayed and laid aside and forgotten. It is not enough to be convinced of sin; we must make application for pardon, and trust in Christ's merits. We must not satisfy our minds that Christ's precepts are good; we must run in the path of His commandments. II. THE DUTY IMPOSED BY THIS DOCTRINE. "Work out your," &c. We have here a summons. 1. To begin in the work. Men say, "Why trouble ourselves; until God stretch forth His hand and break the chain of our sins, it would be useless for us to make the attempt." This is to pervert the grace of God to our sure destruction, and to turn into an argument for indolent indifference the most powerful incentive to exertion. The Bible brings Christ's message to men. It beseeches universal acceptance. With the external message the dispensations of providence have concurred to warn off the folly and peril of delay, and to urge instant acceptance. 2. To carry on the work. It is not enough to begin the course; we must persevere. And there is much to be worked out: love of sin, evil habits have to be extirpated, the love of God to be intensified, closer conformity to our great Pattern to be attained. The consideration that God worketh in you leaves you without excuse for negligence and without ground for despondency. 3. The work is to be carried out with fear and trembling; with the reverence and godly fear which love inspires—"With that man will I dwell who is of a humble and contrite spirit," &c. (*R. Redpath, M.A.*) *Divine grace and human endeavours*:—I. HUMAN AGENCY in things which concern salvation. II. DIVINE AGENCY. 1. Its reality. (1) Christian character begins by Divine agency; for it begins in regeneration, which is unquestionably the work of God. (2) It is maintained by the same, for God works in His people to will and to do. 2. Its necessity. (1) From the corruption of human nature. Were man naturally inclined to what is good, a counteracting influence would be superfluous. (2) From the temptations to evil, which necessitate Divine protection. 3. Its source—the Divine will. God works because "of His good pleasure." He chooses to work.

(1) Not arbitrarily in the sense of capriciously. We are assured from a consideration of the wisdom, rectitude, love, and unchangeableness of God that for all His doings there are adequate reasons. (2) Not arbitrary in the sense of having no law. His own perfection supplies laws, which, like their sources, are perfect, and in conformity with them He uniformly acts. 4. Its effect. God works in His people. (1) To will, under which term we understand desires, intentions, resolutions, and affections. This Divine energy does not impair our will. We are conscious of acting at all times as we will, and never more so than when we seek the things of God. "I have chosen the way of truth, incline my heart," &c. (2) To do. The effect should never be disjoined from the cause, nor the cause from the effect. It is not God works in us, therefore we need not work; but therefore we work. III. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO. Both are matter of fact, and must be believed as facts whatever may be our opinion of their relation. (1) A theory which should harmonize them would supply no additional reason for believing the facts. (2) The absence of such theory affords no warrant for disbelieving them. 2. A knowledge of the point is unattainable, since it is none other than the manner in which the Infinite mind acts on created minds. We have three sources of knowledge. (1) Consciousness; the knowledge of what passes in our own minds affords no assistance. (2) Observation; the cognizance of what comes before the senses avails us nothing. (3) No testimony but what is Divine could make us acquainted with the subject, and none has been given. 3. But while we know nothing of the internal working of the Infinite mind, we know something of the methods. God's gracious influence on the soul very much consists in His causing clear and realizing apprehensions of things as they are to abide in the mind. For this purpose He removes hindrances which prevent Divine truth from being known and considered, and consequently from yielding its appropriate fruit. (1) Inattention. The person whose heart the Lord opens attends to the things that are spoken. (2) Pride. God shows man things as they are, himself abominable, God excellent. (3) Love of the world. "Things which are seen," being "temporal," appear, as they actually are, next to nothing in comparison with the "things which are not seen and eternal." Thus trust in God, love to God, hope of heaven, &c., are called into habitual exercise, the will directed to God and goodness, and the conduct proportionably changed for the better. Conclusion: The subject affords materials for—1. Examination. We may learn from it whether our creed and our practice in relation to the topics discussed are scriptural or erroneous. (1) Are you rendered careless respecting your affections and conduct by the consideration that God worketh in you? (2) Are you disposed on the other hand to think lightly of the Divine influence? 2. Encouragement to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, but are conscious of their moral weakness. The very desire is a proof that God has done much for you, and a pledge that He will do more. (*G. Burder, M.A.*) *The law of spiritual interaction:—*I. THE NATURE OF SALVATION. It is something to be worked out, a moral process in man himself. On the one hand it is the overcoming and casting out of evil, and on the other the assimilation and development of good. It is restoration from disease to health. The man who is undergoing salvation is both cured and nourished. This is the result of the joint work of God and man—man being able to do his part because God works, and God's working requiring man's work. II. Paul's putting of the matter is in perfect agreement with the scientific law THAT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ARE DEPENDENT ON THE DUE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE THING THAT HAS TO GROW AND A FITTING ENVIRONMENT. To this biological law all living things are subject. Take, *e.g.*, a corn of wheat: until it is acted on by a fitting environment it can neither grow nor produce fruit. The grains of wheat found in Egyptian mummies might have been thought dead. Yet no sooner were they sown in appropriate soil than they began to grow, simply because they were duly acted on by a fitting environment. Some of them, while the same in appearance with the rest, were dead; they rotted and disappeared because they were incapable of reacting in response to their environment. The first movement proceeds from the surroundings; then follows the response of the germ. Or take our body. Unless we are blessed with sunshine, breathe pure air, eat nourishing food, &c., we can neither develop, nor retain our health. The same principle holds good in disease. A cure depends on proper action from without by medicine or diet. If there is nothing in them to affect our condition, we go from bad to worse, and if our condition is so bad that the medicine works no responsive action, our case is equally hopeless. III. WHAT IS THE REAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS INTERACTION? Is the organism pushed like a ball set in

motion? No. Our environment acts on us by becoming food to us, and light, air, heat, as well as bread and water, are food. And food feeds us by becoming one with us, and energizing in us. "They work in you to will and to do." But the power in the food cannot become ours without our effort. We must at least be able to digest. If we cannot do that the most nutritious food will not save us from death. Here again we may say, "Work physically, for it is food that worketh," &c. The same with medicine. Our phrase is, "Has it begun to work?" But the entire man is subject to this great law, man not only as a physical but as a spiritual being. IV. GOD IS THE ULTIMATE ENVIRONMENT OF OUR SPIRITUAL NATURE, as light and air and food to our body. Therefore, unless He act upon us it is impossible that we should act, nor can His action have any result unless we respond and co-operate. And He does not merely influence us from without, give us commands or present motives; He enters and His energy becomes ours, in virtue whereof we can will or do. But we must lay hold of Him and assimilate His energy. God can no more become our spiritual light, life, and strength without receptive action than undigested bread can be the staff of life. V. THAT WHICH IS TRUE OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IN GENERAL IS EMPHATICALLY TRUE OF IT AS ENFEEBLED AND DARKENED BY SIN. Unless God come to our help the weakness and darkness cannot be overcome; but equally hopeless is our case unless we receive His help. If we are so far gone in moral corruption that no function of our spiritual being can come into action, anything that God does will no more avail us than light and water a plant that has withered. God must interfere, and we must open our nature to His influences. He moves first, but there must be a corresponding movement on our side. What is this but what Paul says in the text. VI. WE ARE SO CONSTITUTED BY GOD THAT WE CANNOT BE SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY WITHOUT HIM. This always was, is, and will be the case. Man's moral weakness and corruption are rooted in the refusal to let God work in him, in the resolve to be self-sufficient. Man without God is like an organism without nourishment. What a starving man is such is the spiritual man without God. Now suppose you went to relieve such a starving man, and he were to say, "I cannot accept your food till I am stronger," you would exclaim, "How can you expect to be strong without food? Can you feed on yourself?" No less absurd is our behaviour in regard to salvation. God is waiting to do His part. You, also, in secret, want to do yours; but you cannot without Him. VII. THOSE WHO HAVE BEGUN TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION FIND THAT THEIR ONLY SALVATION IS IN GOD. It is not merely that He must help you now and then. Continuous trust and fellowship are the only safety. (*Principal Simon.*) *The Christian work.—First part:—*I. THE DUTY—"Work." The estate of a Christian is a working not idle estate. Christianity is not verbal profession nor speculative (John xiii. 17). 1. Works of preparation are those that prepare men to believe, as hearing, reading, meditating. 2. From these a Christian ought to proceed to—(1) Works of piety, faith, hope, prayer, and—(2) works of charity. 3. The use of all this is to give us a right conceit of religion. Many are good talkers, and yet never come one step towards salvation. II. THE RIGHT MANNER OF PERFORMING THE DUTY. 1. Obediently. "As ye have obeyed." Whatever we do it must be in obedience to God. Then—(1) We must know what God's will is (Rom. xii. 2; Eph. v. 10). (2) This must be to all God's laws. Partial obedience is no obedience (Psa. cxix. 10). 2. Sincerely. "Whether I am present or not." God sees you. The Pharisees obeyed to be seen of men (Matt. vi. 2, 6). Joash was a good king as long as Jehoida lived; but a good Christian is ever good, in all places, occasions, companies. 3. Laboriously. "Work out." No perfunctory thing can please God. 4. Constantly—not like morning dew, or Lot's wife who turned back (Luke i. 75; John xvii. 4; 2 Tim. iv. 7-8). To this end—(1) We must come with a resolution not to be scared from the performance of duties, and therefore to be furnished with patience (Heb. x. 36; Gal. vi. 9). (2) We must consider the promises (Rev. iii. 21; Matt. x. 22). 5. It must tend to salvation. We must go on in a constant course of goodness that we may come to the end of our faith. For salvation is begun here, and the state of grace here is called salvation, even as well as the state hereafter. All conclusions are to be reduced to their principles, and so all is to be reduced to salvation as the main principle. Do we sanctify all things by prayer (Col. iii. 24). III. THE MOTIVES TO THIS DUTY. 1. The example of Christ. "Wherefore." Christ did all in obedience to God, &c. 2. The apostle's love. Christians should take good courses, that they may comfort those that are good. 3. The possibility of it. You have gone so far; keep on. 4. The end. Salvation. Considering we are not yet perfect, we are encouraged to go on to perfection (Tit. ii. 11; Heb. xi. 26). IV.

THE SPIRIT IN WHICH IT IS TO BE DONE. 1. Fear is an affection planted by God in our natures, whereby we, foreseeing dangers which may hinder our being or well-being, are afraid of them. This is a spiritual fear. (1) A fear of reverence, which is a fear mixed with love, wherein we stand in awe of God's greatness but love Him for His goodness. (2) A fear of watchfulness. (3) Of jealousy, lest we should offend God. 2. God loves not the careless Christian. 3. All things must be done in this fear, or we shall come short of our salvation. *Second part*.—I. THE CHRISTIAN HATH A WILL AND A POWER TO DO GOOD. II. THIS POWER WE HAVE NOT FROM OURSELVES BUT FROM GOD. Some things are done for us which were neither wrought by us nor in us, *e.g.*, Christ's death. Some things are wrought in us not by us, as our first work of conversion. Other things are wrought in us, and by us, such as all good works after conversion. The will is wrought in us by God as we be His temples, and the deed is wrought by us as instruments of God's inward working. III. THIS WORK OF GOD IN US IS A POWERFUL WORK. He gives to us to will that which He wills. IV. THIS WORK IS INWARD, NOT WITHOUT. He uses exhortations, &c., but He puts power to these to prevail. V. THE PERFECTION OF THIS WORK (Heb. xii. 2; Phil. i. 6). (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Practical religion*.—I. THE PRACTICAL ELEMENT IN RELIGION. II. THE EMOTIONAL ELEMENT—"With fear and trembling. 1. This is not slavish, but reverential fear. 2. We should have "fear and trembling. (1) Because of our accountability. Soon we may hear it said, "Give an account of thy stewardship." (2) Because of the danger of losing souls. (3) Because of our fallibility, we may teach error, and thus be "blind guides." III. THE SUPERNATURAL ELEMENT: "It is God that worketh," &c. (*A. J. Furman.*) *The twofold force in salvation*.—This sentence falls from Paul as easy and natural as his breath. It is a casual remark, true, but not combating any specific error; a simple exhortation to earnestness, with the assurance of Divine co-operation. But what Paul said in this casual way has been caught up by opposing schools, turned to a use he never dreamed of, crowded with a meaning he did not intend, made the rallying cry of theological champions, and a very body of divinity. Arminian and Calvinist have seized it, cut it in two, emphasized each his own word in it according to his philosophy, and thus equipped fought each other for two hundred years over a doctrine of faith and works. The text teaches—I. THAT SALVATION IS AN ACHIEVEMENT. What is here meant by salvation. 1. Negatively. (1) Not anything done by Christ in the way of expiation. (2) Not getting to heaven. A man does not enter heaven to find salvation, but because he has it. (3) Not an immediate work wrought in some hour of deep feeling. What is then done is an important but small part of salvation. 2. Positively. It is a moral process in which time and effort are chief factors. (1) If a man has any sinful habits, he must overcome them; or lacks and weaknesses, he must supply the deficiency. (2) And then there is the great reality of character—a needed group of qualities that only comes about by elaboration. II. THIS ACHIEVEMENT IS THE RESULT OF SHARP AND DEFINITE STRIFE. 1. Every man is bound by every consideration to undertake this work. He is here to do this very thing. 2. When he comes upon the stage he finds evil, and his work is to cast it out and bring in good. No evil goes out of itself. No nation and no man ever grew into virtue or dropped evil as a tree drops dead leaves. 3. Look at the world and its history—tell me if a single gain has been made that did not turn on the overthrow of some positive evil with pain and effort. 4. Let every man ask himself, Am I saving myself? I am ignorant, &c. I find in myself hereditary evil. I have contracted evil habits. I am passing on from day to day without communion with God, doing nothing for humanity. Am I striving to escape from that broad road to destruction? III. THE TWOFOLD PROCESS. Work it out, for God works it in. 1. No other influence can touch a man like God's. When I give you my hand it is in part my strength that upholds you. When you cheer me I am leaning on your inspiration. But when God works in a man to will and to work, the union of wills is so close, that separate threads of influence cannot be detected. It often hurts a man to be helped by others; it never hurts him to be helped by God. 2. The importance of this twofold process. (1) Suppose God were left out and man saved himself, overcame his weakness and faults, and so trained his faculties as to become a wise and good man. What sort of a man would you have? assuredly a conceited one who will at last become a selfish one. A man cannot isolate himself in sharp individuality from God and live. (2) Suppose that God saved a man without any effort of his own: that He shut up the path of evil, and by some Divine alchemy whitened the passive soul, the result would be worse than in the previous case. 3. Now suppose again the reunion of God and man in the

work of salvation. When a man recognizes that God is at the bottom of all his work, he is led straight up to the exercise of every element of His character. Then he becomes reverent, and reverence is one-half of character. Along with this comes humility—the soil of all the virtues. And as the man comes more and more to feel that God is in him he is swept into the current of God's own thought and feelings, and so he loves as God loves; and all the patience, tenderness, truth, and majesty of God work in him, subduing him into their quality. (*T. T. Munger.*) *God works*:—I. SECRETLY—"in you." II. MEDIATELY—by His Word. III. MIGHTILY—by His Spirit. IV. GRACIOUSLY—of His good pleasure. V. EFFECTUALLY—to will and to do. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Salvation a work*:—The word *κατεργάζεσθαι*, "to apply oneself to," properly signifies to do, to work, to labour, and is taken in two ways in the Scripture; sometimes to express to polish, form, and fashion a rough and raw thing, as when a carpenter cuts and polishes wood, and a mason stones, which they desire to employ in their work; and in this sense we may say that God makes us when He creates us in His Son, stripping us of this vile and miserable form of sinners and slaves of Satan, in which we are born, and giving us another, holy and glorious, by which we become His children, precious and lively stones, and fit to enter into the building of His temple, from vile and dead stones, which we were by nature. The other, more common, signification of this word is, to accomplish, perfect, and finish a thing already commenced, to execute it and guide it to its end; as when the apostle says, in Rom. vii. 18, that "to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not;" and when he says besides, in Rom. iv., it "worketh wrath," because it completes in us the feeling of the wrath of God against sin, which without is weak and languid, the light of nature alone without the law only exciting and beginning it in us. (*J. Daill.*) *Salvation worked in and out*:—A clock presents a beautiful emblem of Christianity. When in good order it is always going, and one wheel propels another; and even so must true Christianity be in continual exercise, and every act of godliness make way for the next. As a clock, however, needs to be constantly inspected, and frequently set and cleaned, so God, in His faithfulness and long-suffering, has continual work to do, amending, purifying, and regulating our Christianity. (*T. H. Leary, D.C.L.*) *The working out of salvation gradual*:—A man's salvation is to be wrought out as an artist works out a picture. It is a good thing for a man to make a charcoal sketch; but it will not do to stop at that. It is a good thing that refers to something better that is coming on. He may put in the dead colours, and so make an advance, but it is not an advance which fits the picture to be put up in a gallery for admiration. He may add particular features, and thus make a further advance; but suppose a man were painted perfectly up to his nose, and all the rest were left blank, what sort of a picture would he make? Suppose one of a man's eyes were accurately painted, and the other were all blurred, what would be the effect? Things are good according as they conform to an ideal in the line of progress or development. So whatever tends to educate a man's conscience, to unfold his reason, to enlarge his moral sensibilities, to fill him with the graces of the Spirit, is beneficial; a benefit in that direction may be called works—not condemned works, but works that are efficacious. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The publicity of a worked-out salvation.* You are to work it out. It must be presented to the eye; it is not to be like the works of a watch that are elaborately finished and then concealed in a case. The words imply that there is something in the Christian's heart has to be brought out, and that only work can develop it. A mechanic takes a bar of iron. He knows there is brightness in its nature, so he places it in his lathe, and by means of cutters, files, and other instruments the black or rusty bar is made so bright that it dazzles the eye with its shining surface. And there is that in the heart of every Christian which worked out would delight all that knew him. "Let your light so shine," &c. (*D. R. Jenkins.*) *Man's work an evidence of his salvation*:—William Wickham being appointed by King Edward to build a stately church, wrote in the windows, "This work made William Wickham." When charged by the king for assuming the honour of that work to himself as the author, whereas he was only the overseer, he answered that he meant not that he made the work, but that the work made him, having before been very poor, and then in great credit. Lord, when we read in thy Word that we must work out our own salvation, thy meaning is not that our salvation should be the effect of our work, but our work the evidence of our salvation. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The difficulty of working out our salvation*:—Like the man in the old heathen fable, condemned to roll a ball up a steep hill, no

sooner do we gain a step, than sin tries by its own weight to roll down again and drag us with it. Like our countrymen at the heights of the Alma, the repentant Christian has to force his way upwards to the skies in the face of enemies already entrenched in strong position in his heart, and like them he can only ensure success by the exercise of a vigorous will, assisted in the spiritual warfare by Him who is "mighty to save." (*G. Huntington, M.A.*) *Work out your own salvation*:—Cast a sponge into water, and, the fluid filling its empty cells, it swells out before our eyes; increases more and more. There is no effort here, and could be none; for though once a living animal, the sponge is now dead and dry. But it is not as sponges fill with water, nor, to use a Scripture figure often employed, and sometimes misapplied, as Gideon's fleece was filled with dew, that God's people are replenished with His grace. More is needed than simply to bring ourselves in contact with ordinances; to read the Bible; to repair on Sabbath to the Church; to sit down in communion seasons at the Lord's table. The babe, for example, is laid in a mother's arms, and in contact with her breast; but is laid there only to die, unless, with slumbering instincts awakened, it fastened and suck by its own efforts the nourishment provided for it, independent of itself; and there, drawing life from a mother's bosom, it lies in her loving arms, the symbol of him who hangs by faith in Christ, and, fed on the sincere milk of the word, is nourished up into the likeness and image of God. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The motive for this work*:—Just as the same electricity that flashes like an avenging sword from the cloud, and that lightens from one side of heaven to the other, also trembles in the dew-drop, and flies along the wire, carrying news from one continent to another: so the Divine Power that binds all holy beings in chains of loyalty and love to the throne of the eternal, and that breaks the bond of our captivity, and raises us to a state of spiritual enlargement and fellowship, also enables us to discharge the smallest duties and the common daily responsibilities of the Christian life. "Christ is all, and in all," in every duty, in every service. (*James Owen.*) *Salvation to be worked out with fear and trembling*:—The face of the helmsman in coming down the rapids of the St. Lawrence in the great vessel is a sight to see. He takes in, as it were, all the conditions of the case, in one inevitable glance—the bank; the bend; the shallowing or deepening bed; the amount of way on the vessel; the hurry of the waters; the calm spread of the deep river lying like a peaceful haven yonder in the distance! There he stands—fearful, yet firm—distrustful, yet confident—until the danger is past. With a similar feeling—not slavishly afraid—but intent, earnest, bending all the powers in concentrated effort towards the ultimate object—so "work out your salvation." (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *We must fear and tremble because of the preciousness of salvation, and because of the co-operation of omnipotence*:—Did you ever have committed to your care something exceedingly rare and precious; something of singular beauty or untold value? Did you ever come into the possession of something long and ardently desired, which you had thought to be too good, too sweet, too lovable ever to be really yours, your very own? Was not there an awe, almost a terror in the sense of that possession? Did you not say to yourself, "Who am I that I should have this? What if I should let it drop? What if I should lose it?" Did not the very joy make you "afraid" and your happiness make you "tremble"? There is another cause of "fear" and "trembling!" You are working with Omnipotence, it is an awful thing working with God! What a responsibility! What a position for a man, a poor sinner, to be in! "What if my shortcomings and sins should deprive me at last of that friendship, and turn His very kindness into a curse! The thought may well make me 'fear and tremble!'" And how tremendous is the issue at stake! To have been once saved; to have stood on that high and blessed position; to have tasted that peace, and then to lose it all! Oh! what bitter self-reproach for ever! What a wrong done to my own dear kind Saviour! What an aggravation to my time of misery! (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *God working in us*:—Sunlight is universal; it shines everywhere; but when you bring it to bear upon your plants in greenhouses you specialize it. The black Hamburg grape you cannot raise out of doors, although there is sunlight there. You build glass houses; you so arrange them that the sun's rays fall upon the vines; you secure the conditions required for their growth, and the consequence is that you have fruit. You specialize the sunlight by the skill of the gardener. There are certain latitudes in which given results cannot be obtained by sunlight without specializing it. The Divine influence is diffused upon the good and the bad alike, just as sunlight is; but when men understand it and accept it by the

force of their own will, putting themselves in the line of God's nature, it becomes special to them, and works in them both to will and to do of God's good pleasure. The Divine influence is to the human will what the atmosphere is to the eye and to the ear, and what that which is taken into the mouth is to the tongue. If it were not for the atmosphere and its vibrations the eye would perish; it would have nothing to do; for although it is an organ for seeing, it cannot see in and of itself. The ear is an organ for hearing, but the ear cannot hear of itself. It must have outside pulsations beating upon it. The tongue cannot taste unless it has something of which to taste. When a seed is planted in good soil it is given over to the sun; and when the sun undertakes to care for a plant it always keeps its eye on the blossom and the fruit which it is to unfold. It is not enough that it develops stem, branches, and flowers. The tendency of the sun is to bring everything up to its ultimate consummation. So the tendency of the Divine Spirit is to draw men up steadily through the whole range of their faculties till they blossom. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Divine energy an incentive to human:*—Suppose that you were involved in temporal difficulties, that a benevolent friend came forward to pay your debts, and place you in a better position than you had ever occupied, would you argue, "Well, I need not care how wasteful I become, or how heavy the demands which he may meet; he has enough aid to spare. As his heart overflows with benevolence, I will leave him to settle all matters without my aid, and when everything has been done, I may be prevailed on to take advantage of his goodness; but, in the meantime, I will be as reckless as I may"? The question instantly occurs, How it is either possible or right, consistent with benevolence, to assist such a character? Suppose that your house were on fire, and a well-appointed train of firemen, with their engines, were at hand, to assist in quenching the flames, would you retreat from a scene where perhaps your most important worldly interests were at stake, and where lives dearer to you than your own were in danger, and betake yourself to dissipation or amusement, saying there were persons paid for the work, and whose office and duty it was to attend to it, and that you would devolve all the trouble on them? You could not be so unnatural; you would do everything to rouse the sleeping inmates, to secure your most important papers; and whatever energy, daring, and skill and diligence could accomplish, you would do. Or suppose, again, that you were placed in a garrison which was beleaguered by fierce and formidable foes, that the attacks upon the fortifications were pushed most vigorously on all sides, and it required all your skill and labour night and day to defend yourselves; but in the meantime a numerous and well-appointed army had been sent by your sovereign to your relief, well able to raise the siege and effect your liberation; when you heard the news, would you remit your ardour and watchfulness? When you heard the sound of the trumpets, and the roar of the artillery as they marched to the conflict, and when you knew that the moment of your rescue was at hand, is there a man who would fold his arms, and refuse to mount the ramparts, to sally out and make a diversion on his own side of the camp? who would not dare and do everything to make the defeat of the enemy as complete as possible? If the men refused, the very women would cry shame upon them, take up the arms which the dastards had thrown away, and help to achieve the victory. But, my friends, you have auxiliaries far mightier and stronger than the best disciplined and most enthusiastic troops that ever general brought into the field of battle. You have the army of the Lord of hosts, and at its head the Captain of your salvation; you have all the resources of Omnipotence collected and concentrated for your deliverance. If ever impulse or energy was communicated to the human mind, it must be by such considerations as these; and with all these mercies, boundless and glorious, around you and before, is it not high time to shake off your slumber, to commence your work, and to ask with eagerness, "What shall we do to be saved?" "What shall we do that we may do the works of God?" (*R. Redpath, M.A.*) *God's grace and man's free agency:*—You might as well expect the steam which gives its mighty energy to the engine to perform all the delicate workmanship of some textile manufacture without the directing brain and controlling hand, as to hope for grace to work apart from the co-operation of the human will; and again, you might as soon expect these mechanical results without the motive power, as that man should save himself without God's grace. The body is supplied with an organization admirably adapted to our wants, but it is the mind which directs every action, and it is the principle of life which renders action possible. Deprive it of intelligence, and what one action would be rightly performed? And yet we feel that there is a mutual

concurrence of mind and body when we do perform anything. (*G. Huntington, M.A.*) *Grace is God's work*:—Before any daisy or violet, before any blossom is seen in the field, the sun lies with its bosom to the ground, crying to the flower, and saying, "Why tarriest thou so long?" and day after day the sun comes, and pours its maternal warmth upon the earth, and coaxes the plant to grow and bloom. And when days and weeks have passed the root obeys the call and sends out its germ, from which comes the flower. Had it not been for the sun's warmth and light, the flower could never have come to itself. So the Eternal Spirit of God rests on the human soul, warming it, quickening it, calling it, and saying, "O, my son! where art thou?" And at last it is this Divine sympathy and brooding influence that brings men to God, and leads them to say, "Am I not sinful?" and to yearn for something higher and purer and holier. It was God's work. He long ago was "working in you, to will and to do of His own good pleasure." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *God is a silent worker*:—The grandest operations both in nature and in grace are the most silent and imperceptible. The shallow brook babbles in its passage, and is heard by every one; but the coming on of the seasons is silent and unseen. The storm rages and alarms; but its fury is soon exhausted, and its effects are partial and soon remedied; but the dew, though gentle and unheard, is immense in quantity, and the very life of large portions of the earth. And these are pictures of the operations of grace, in the Church and in the soul. (*R. Cecil.*) *God's agency effective when man's is impotent*:—See Israel at the Red Sea. By the wilderness, and the mountains, and the sea, the people are shut in; and behind them is Pharaoh in close pursuit, with his great and well-equipped army. If we look simply at man's valour or wisdom, resistance and escape are equally and utterly hopeless. The cry of Israel to Moses is, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" But Moses said to them, "Fear ye not: stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show you to-day. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." At this point, you observe, they are called to be simple spectators of "the salvation of the Lord," looking on with adoring wonder at the mighty work which only the Divine hand could accomplish—the opening of a pathway for them through the midst of the great waters. But afterwards, for the "Stand still and see," comes a command to display energetic activity. "The Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea." So with you and me, dear brethren. The expiation of guilt, the "working out of our salvation" meritoriously, could be achieved only by the God-man; and our part is to "stand still," and "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." But now, when, by the Lord's propitiatory sufferings and death, a way, broad and clear, has been opened for us through the midst of the waters of avenging judgment, His command, loud and explicit, to every one of us is that, by persistent, growing faith and holiness, we "go forward." (*R. Johnstone, L.L.B.*) *Man to work in his salvation*:—Though salvation remains wholly of grace, it may be described as worked out by ourselves. God does not reduce man into a machine; He rather puts a machine at man's disposal, and having imparted the strength to turn the wheel, requires of man that he labour, in order to the evolving the web from the loom. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Man permeable by God*:—Just as it is the distinction of a crystal, that it is transparent, able to let the light into and through its close flinty body, and be irradiated by it in the whole mass of its substance, without being at all more or less a crystal, so it is the grand distinction of humanity, that it is made permeable by the Divine nature, prepared in that manner to receive and entemple the Infinite Spirit, to be energized by Him, and filled with His glory in every faculty, feeling, and power. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *Salvation possible, but not easy*:—Christ has made salvation possible for us, but He has not made it easy; He has brought it near to each of us, but we have still to be working it out. He has cast, as it were, the rope to shipwrecked souls, vainly buffeting with the breakers, and blinded with the spray. We could never have made our way without this help, bruised and battered, benumbed as we were. We could never have saved ourselves without His help, but now all may be well, through Him, only there still needs effort on our part as well as on His, if only to hold fast by the cord of life and watch against the perils that still lie in our way. That effort is needed as really as is His help. The door of life is still open, but it is still a strait gate, and we must strive to enter in. Eternal life may be laid hold of, but we must fight the good fight in order to lay hold on it. (*W. C. Smith, D.D.*)

Working out salvation:—Much more in my absence prove to yourselves, prove to all who care to look at you, that you do not depend on me, that you do not hang upon man or angel; but that you hang on God, who brought the Gospel to you, although He brought it on my lips. It was He who brought it, and He has not gone; He worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. "Oh, ye Philippians," he says, "you are at no loss, you are at no disadvantage; true I am not with you, though I fain would be; but God is with you, and He is now working in you." I sometimes think that this verse receives its fullest emphasis by taking it from Paul's mouth and putting it into Christ's. We hear it as coming not from Paul the servant, but from Christ the great Master within the veil as He looks down on us. Oh, how it fits us! We are so apt to say—if He were here, then how our sanctification and our Christian work would get on. If He were here with us! And Christ says to us, to us His Philippians here in London, speaking down from the eternal glory, "Wherefore, My beloved, as ye have always obeyed not as in My presence only, but now much more in My absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for I am working in you both to will and to do of My good pleasure." Christians, we are walking not by sight, but by a spiritual vision of Him who has gone before us, and is drawing us surely and certainly into His own presence. "Not as in My presence only, but now much more in My absence, let there be intensity, let there be individualism; let every man feel that this is his own affair; and while you receive all ministries and all gifts of that kind helpfully and thankfully, rise superior to them all; reach out and forth to Me Myself, your Saviour, your Sanctifier, your All in all." "Your own salvation;" what does that mean? That is a rare word in the Bible; the Bible is not fond of calling anything our own. I must realize that I have in my heart the salvation I am to work out. Let me enhance this thought in your mind, the thought that salvation is made over to us as our own, in a Book which from beginning to end strips us of all real ownership. "This is mine," says a man here, or a man not here, "this is my pile, I scraped it together; I rose early, I sat up late," and as he says it he jerks his money-bags or turns over his bank-book to the balance. And as we have seen in Glasgow some years ago, in the case of the City of Glasgow Bank, the bank breaks and he is a beggar—he is a beggar! This that he was calling his, even while he clutched it, it left him; for riches take unto themselves wings, and prove to us that that possessive word was foolish; it is disproved by bitter fact. If your wealth was really yours, why did you let it go? "My property," says a man. "See that? See that fine row of buildings? that is mine. These title-deeds mine, securely mine," and the next morning he is poking among the black ashes with his stick; his property has gone up in a chariot of fire, and come down in a shower of soot! Oh, how sarcastically the chapter of accidents disputes with us this expression: "My own." How did that happen if it was really yours? "My child," says a mother, "my own, my firstborn, the latest thing in babies, did you ever see his like? My own," and she draws him to her bosom. I can imagine some mother saying, "Now, preacher, you can surely allow the expression here—My own baby;" No, I dare not; I must be true to God's Word, and true to the facts of life. There is a Power that dares to come in between the babe and the bosom; and that is close work, is it not? "Your own salvation." That thing, if I may so say, for which you had neither right nor claim nor title, handed over to you, and as it is handed over, this word along with it—"Now that is yours." "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord;" "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life;" "He that believeth hath"—open your arms, man!—"everlasting life." Now, thou black, grim, doubting devil that dost for ever whisper thy words in my ear, I will fight thee here. "My own salvation"—mine because it is a gift. Salvation is ours because it is a gift, and from One who will never withdraw it. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Now let us get on to the command, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." That is what I wanted to get at. You have to be active. God's sovereignty and power evoke human responsibility and activity. You have it, therefore work it out. To use a common illustration: there is a load of bricks here, a load of timber and some slates. That is not a house. No; but there is the making of one, and you can make the house out of it. Now the Lord lays all down at our door; He puts it into our hearts; He comes with the plan and the specification and the material, and says, "Now work them out." The Greek has at its root the idea of "energize." Oh! what a pulsing word—energize your own salvation. Now there are just a number of people needing the word "energize." The doctrines are

lying on your souls like great unwrought lumps of dough that you have not worked out—l speak to house-wives—and no man can feed on dough; it will kill him! Many of you are dyspeptics, feeding on Gospel doctrine that you have not kneaded and fired—and I don't know what—but you understand what I mean! "Work out your own salvation." Get up now, put your feet below you, fling off your coat, turn up your sleeves, and go at this business like the work of a lifetime, and never stop it, this work of saving yourself, if I may be as contradictory as the Bible is. When the Lord comes to me in all the light of His saving grace, He shows me what to do. He brings all with Him that is needed; but I am not to be lazy; I am not to lie back and do nothing. Now you know what to do. You have a bad temper—work out your salvation. You are getting to be a fair pest in the house because of this temper. You are not to go and cuddle up this temper and say, "I am a child of God, though I have a little infirmity." Be saved from your infirmity, oh sweet child of God! Another says, "I do believe that I am saved, but I am inconsistent." Well, save yourself from this inconsistency—work out your own salvation. What would you think of the man who went about with his hands in his pockets whistling and joking, because he had a load of bricks and stones and timber lying all around there; and wanting shelter on a wintry day, he creeps under the bricks and says, "This is my house: here will I dwell." Are not some of us doing so? Why, if you could see your spiritual house as the Lord sees it, you would get in an awful fright. Oh man, work out your own salvation! Now, blessed be God, His great gift will work out. There is a grand "furtherness"—if you don't know that word, so much the worse for you—in the grace which comes from Jesus Christ, which will expand and extend and yield as long as you make demands upon it. There are many gifts we get that have none of this furtherness in them. You have them in your house. The first day that gift came to you—some ornament, it is on the mantelpiece—when it came first it told on you, it told of your friend's kindness, and for a little time there was much in it. But as time went on it did not expand, its gold became dim, and there came some day, some dull, dark day, that you were doleful and needed help, and you stood and looked at that gift, and it utterly failed to do you good. It came to an end. The next question is, How? Here is the *modus operandi*—"With fear and trembling." "With fear and trembling"—what does it mean? I does not mean that we are to go through life with our knees for ever smiting each other because "in such an hour as we think not" we will drop into the pit again. Many take that meaning out of it, and that paralyzes work. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." The cup of salvation is so full, it is so brimming, it is so sweet, that it would be "too sweet to be wholesome;" it would go to the head and make us reel and stagger, and become unwatchful and hilarious, and defeat its own purpose. But, wherever Christ gives the cup of salvation, He puts in an infusion of these tonic bitters, "fear and trembling," so that Grace may not cloy and clog. These are the bitter herbs with which we eat our Passover. The more freely you take of Christ, the more careful you become in life and conduct. It is like the ballast to the ship. You have seen those yachts of ours, designed by Watson and built by Fyfe—things of beauty, and almost instinct with life. There it is; the sea is sparkling in the sun; there is a splendid, crisp breeze blowing. Watch that squall of wind as it strikes the yacht with its great mass and breadth of canvas that would do for the mainsail of a man-of-war. See what happens! You would expect the very breadth of the sheet is going to spoil all. That squall will strike the sail and the vessel will careen and go the bottom. Not at all: that squall strikes her, and most gracefully she yields to it and heels over on to her very beam end; but look at the out-water. See how she is tearing through! For deep down there is the keel, and a great weight upon it; in these modern days tons of lead are run along the keel; or, as in America, there is a great centre-board sent away down into the water, which gives tremendous leverage; and no matter how the yacht heels over, it holds her steady and prevents disaster. So with religion: spread your sails to the gales of Gospel grace; take Christ in all the fulness of the Father's gift as He is, and the Gospel doctrines will not sink you; you will not grow giddy and light-headed, but this fear and trembling will give you rest, weight, grip, ballast, solidity, and you will urge your course forward across these seas of time and sin with splendid speed. It is just like what you have when a man has been saved who was drowning, and all his kicking and struggling were only hastening it. And when this kicking and struggling were over, some one has reached from above and drawn him out, and

there he stands on the solid land, saved. Ah! but it was a narrow shave. Rejoicing, but it is not a hilarious rejoicing, is it? He is not cracking his thumbs and jiggling, but he is rejoicing "with trembling." He is altogether saved, and he was so nearly altogether lost. "With fear and trembling." Take another illustration. An eminent French surgeon used to say to his students when they were engaged in difficult and delicate operations, in which coolness and firmness were needed, "Gentlemen, don't be in a hurry, for there's no time to lose." Time to make that incision once and well in the vital place, not time to dash at it with over-confidence. Before you have recovered yourself a precious life will have been spilled. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"—no swagger, no bounce, no bravado, no cocksureness, yet every confidence that He who hath begun this good work will carry it on to the perfect day. All confidence in Thee, my God, and none in myself; that is the way in which I do the best work towards God, or my brother man. Only one life, no second chance for evermore; and into this one life, into this one day, we are to crowd, to pack the utmost of holy living in every direction that we possibly can, "with fear and trembling." "For it is God that worketh in you;" but I just wish to recite it before I let you go. You work out, as one has said; for God works in. There is the mainspring, there is the unfailing Source, of all the believer's energy for sanctification, and for personal effort in the Church of Christ to promote His cause. It is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Then let me say at once, we can be holy, we shall be holy, for it is God who worketh in us. Poor drunkard, thou canst give up drink; lustful man, thou canst be clean; for it is God, it is God that worketh in you. Do not be a football of the world, of the flesh, and the devil, for it is God that worketh in you. "Ah! it is true, it is all true; but what can I do?" Now we come back to the Power: "It is God;" and what can He not do if you will only let Him? God is the Source. See how He puts it. It is God that worketh in you. How? Listen: "both to will and to do." The first thing is to get the will right, and then the deed, don't you see, will follow. Is it not your complaint and mine, that the will is wrong, the will is twisted, the will has been led captive by the devil? Well, there is an engine—that splendid creation of the engineering faculty of the nineteenth century! But did you ever see an engine which was allowed to drive itself? There is a splendid horse, but did you ever see a blood horse that was allowed to drive itself? Your engine needs a driver, and your horse needs a rider; and your converted man has a God in him, managing him in every direction. There is the engineer; he steps on the foot-plate: with one hand he holds the reversing-rod, that sends the engine backwards or forwards; with the other hand, he holds the throttle-valve, the opening of which lets the steam into the cylinders. So with God: He holds the will and the doing. Thou art managed, splendidly managed. God will drive thee. God will see to thy supplies, and will keep up the Divine pressure. Thou shalt be filled unto all the fulness of God. (*J. McNeill.*)

Vers. 14-16. Do all things without murmurings and disputings.—Here is—I. AN IMPORTANT ADMONITION. II. A POTENT ARGUMENT—for the sake of your own character, position, comfort—for the sake of the world which must be reprovèd, enlightened, saved. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) I. THE EXHORTATION. 1. The apostle dissuadeth against murmuring, of which there are two sorts. (1) Against God (*Num. xi. 5*). The successors of these complaining Israelites are those who in time of scarcity either (a) break out into impatient speeches, such as "What means the Lord to kill us with famine? What greater sinners are we than such and such? Would God He would either mend these things or make an end of us." Or (b) through malcontent seek to raise up seditions and rebellions in the commonwealth, so to procure a remedy by a worse mischief. But what was the end of the ancient murmurers? Let the modern ones read for their warning *1 Cor. x.* (2) Those who murmur at their brethren: grudging their wealth, popularity, or preferment, and seeking their discredit and downfall. So the Pharisees, &c., against Christ, and the Grecians against the disciples (*Acts vi. 1*). And this is what the apostle here condemns. To murmur against our neighbour is (a) a common fault. If he be our superior we murmur against him as too great to dwell so near us, be he never so kind to us; if he be our equal we grudge that he should come forward as well as ourselves, or be equally honoured with ourselves; if he be our inferior we disdain him, and his livelihood we wish for ourselves. (b) The vile malice of this disease is that if there be some cause for our murmuring we make it not a matter of friendly

expostulation, but of heart rankling and backbiting. (c) The root from whence this springs is an evil and jealous mind, which it behoves us to weed out, and to cultivate an opposite temper, candid, open, generous. 2. Against disputings. That we should not fall into open brawlings or quarrellings (Gen. xiii. 7-8). (1) Imitate Abraham's example. He was Lot's elder and uncle, but he did not stand on that, but goes to Lot kindly and yields his right rather than contend with him. (2) See whence these rise and what are their companions (Gal. v. 20; 2 Cor. xii. 20). (3) Note again the counsel of the wise man (Prov. xxv. 8; xvii. 14). (4) This becomes not them who have given their names to Christ (ver. 5), but rather love, peace, courtesy, gentleness. II. THE REASON OF THIS EXHORTATION. 1. That ye may be blameless. Is this possible? (1) We cannot escape blame even as Christ could not. (2) But we can avoid occasions of blame as Christ (John xv. 25), and Zacharias and Elisabeth (Luke i. 6). (3) And then when it comes causeless through our reproof of the blameworthy, who will turn upon us, we need not be afraid of it. 2. Pure. If we hit this mark we shall not miss the other. If pure, then blameless. So we should study to avoid the contagion of sin (Matt. x. 16; Eph. vi. 5; James i. 8). 3. The sons of God in the midst, &c., *i.e.*, that it may be known that we are such (2 Pet. i. 10, &c.). (1) How shall this appear? By walking without rebuke (Rom. viii. 14). This is the undoubted stamp of our adoption being the fruit of the spirit. (2) How can we thus live? Is it not a crooked and perverse nation? True, there is danger that if we touch pitch we shall be defiled, and if we walk amongst thorns be pricked by them. Whereupon there are many warnings against the company and enticements of the world (Prov. i. 10-14, iv. 14-15; Psal. xxvi. 4-5, i. 1). What then? must we adopt monasticism? No (Gen. xix. 1; 2 Pet. ii. 8)! but rather think of these precepts. (a) That we fashion not ourselves like unto the world (Rom. xii. 2; 1 John ii. 16). (b) That we, like just Lot, be vexed in our souls when we see and hear the words and deeds of the wicked (2 Pet. ii. 8; Psal. cxix. 158, 136, 53, 139). (c) That we, like Noah, admonish the wicked. (d) That we try to win them to the ways of Christ. (*H. Airay, D.D.*) *The cultivation of a Christian deportment*:—Conversion is a great change; but the converted need frequent caution lest they should return to pollution in consequence of their surroundings and temptations, and constant exhortations to follow holiness. Hence the rules before us. I. THE CHRISTIAN DEPORTMENT, the cultivation of which is commanded. 1. The spirit which Christians are to cherish towards God—"without murmuring," *i.e.*, impatient discontent with God as have imposed harsh laws, and required difficult obedience. This is the temper of unconverted men, but many professors are in danger of cherishing it. Reflect then—(1) That Christ's burden is easy, and that His commandments are not grievous. (2) That they are given to prevent injury to the soul. (3) That obedience is claimed as a testimony of gratitude. (4) That there is a heavenly recompense. If these weigh with you, so far from murmuring you will love the law of your God and rejoice in His testimonies. 2. The spirit which Christians are to cherish towards men—"without disputings." (1) The spirit of contention is most injurious to the individual and the Church, and is everywhere condemned. (2) It is to be feared that this consideration is largely disregarded, witness our internal disputes and the strife of sects. (3) As the reasons for unity are most cogent, Christians and Churches should love one another. 3. The spirit Christians are to cherish in relation to the public interests and extension of the truth. "Shine . . . word of life." (1) The advocacy of the truth is not to be confined to the ministry; these words were addressed to saints as well as bishops. How can Christians better shine as lights than by exhibiting the lamp of truth either by preaching, Sunday-school teaching, Bible or tract circulation, family instruction, &c. To this end we need the Pentecostal fire. II. THE MOTIVES by which the cultivation of this deportment is commanded. 1. The just vindication of the Christian character in the presence of the ungodly world. As they exhibited the elements of the Christian character indicated they would be "blameless," &c., and compel adversaries to render the gospel the tribute of their homage. The importance of this motive is seen—(1) In the constancy and energy with which it is urged. (2) The damage inflicted on Christianity by inconsistent Christians. 2. The joy which this exhibition will produce to the minister of the gospel in the day of Christ. Then—(1) The holy deportment of believers will be made the subject of public acknowledgment at the last day (Matt. xxv.). What an inspiring thought! (2) It will then be the cause of ministerial joy. There is joy in conversion, progress, usefulness, triumphant death, but no joy can equal the last of all. (3) This, then, should prove a powerful argument for the cultivation of

this deportment. The benefits received from the ministry demand this grateful return. Conclusion: A revival of religion, in the way indicated by the text, would speedily inaugurate the triumph of Christianity. (*J. Parsons.*) *The duties of Church members:*—As a Christian Church you profess to be a society of believing and faithful men. Without piety you have no place in the Church. Your disqualifications may not appear to men, but they are marked by God. **(I.)** Your duty to YOUR MINISTER, or rather to God in relation to Him. "Do all things without murmurings," &c., readily, cheerfully, consistently. 1. Love him, as the man who devotes himself to your welfare, as the man who loves you. Where this is wanting outward attention is a worthless form; when this is cultivated all necessary for his happiness will follow. 2. Hear him—(1) Candidly. His office is no easy one. Make allowances for ill-health and a jaded mind. (2) Regularly, or his instructions will be impaired and he discouraged. (3) Prayerfully, before you come; as you hear. His comfort and usefulness depend largely upon this. 3. Respect his official authority. Some exaggerate this by sacerdotal superstitions; others unduly and unscripturally depreciate it. 4. Supply his temporal wants. This is a matter of right, not charity. It is not to be doled out "murmuringly," but given generously, so that he may be honest and given to hospitality. **(II.)** Your duty to THE CHURCH. 1. Unity: the negative "without murmurings," implies the positive. There may be no murmurings because no life—a calmness of death. The only union of worth is that which is quickened by the Spirit. This does not exclude variety. There is beauty, strength, perfection, in harmonious diversity: John's, Peter's, Thomas's. 2. Consistency—"blameless," &c. Not giving the lie to profession by unchristian tempers, and affording the enemies of the Cross occasion for rebuke. Members of the Church may be divided into—(1) Those who do good. (2) Those who do harm. (3) Those who do both. (4) Those who do neither. Now at least belong to the last. It will be but a poor consistency, but it will be harmless, while the positive in consistency, seen in outbreaks of wicked temper, in the violation of truth and justice, in malicious speaking and cruel slander, such brings a stigma on the member and the Church. Consistency, however, requires—(1) That you take an interest in the affairs of the Church; (2) that you attend its meetings; (3) that you maintain its discipline; (4) that you are jealous for its reputation; (5) that you tell your brother of his fault before you tell it to the Church; (6) that you contribute to its support. And all this you have to exhibit before a crooked and perverse nation, and there is a good deal of crookedness in our times, in legislation, trade and commerce, habits of society. You are by your consistency to draw out the straight lines of Christianity and make the crooked straight. **(III.)** Your duty to THE WORLD. "Shine as lights." Divine light is to be conveyed through your medium. This position is most honourable. It makes you God's agents. It is not entrusted to philosophers, statesmen, or official people, but to believers as such. Around us is darkness; but in the Church there should be light—the contrast should be visible—in the family, social circle, market, everywhere. 1. Let your characters shine; individually like stars; collectively like constellations. 2. Shine by your voluntary, combined, and well-organized efforts. You are to hold up the Word of life through home and foreign missions, thus resembling Eddystone: "To give light and to save life." Through your neglect to do this souls may be wrecked. 3. All must join in this dispensation of light, and blend together in one radiance. Unfortunately some never find this out, and others neglect it. **(IV.)** THE MOTIVE CONSTRAINING TO THESE VARIOUS DUTIES. "That I may rejoice," &c. 1. At that day the relation between pastor and people will be recognized. Nothing is said about other meetings. 2. You can contribute to your pastor's joy. If you are consistent it will be reckoned to his honour then. (*J. Stoughton, D.D.*) *The duties of a Church towards its neighbourhood:*—The relation of a Church to its vicinity is that of—**(I.)** SALT TO THE LAND. A Church owes it to the peoples around to destroy prejudice and to dispose men's minds to the reception of the truth. You live in an age hard to please, &c.; then, be blameless and harmless. The Saviour urged the same duty (Matt. v. 13). Salt was used for manure, to destroy weeds and insects, and to moisten and nourish the soil. Christian characters must remove erroneous notions respecting Christ and His kingdom, awaken attention, and keep from barrenness the field of Christian effort. How? 1. By the irreproachable character of the individual members of a Church. Every true Christian professes to be in training for perfect holiness. Consistency, therefore, requires that he should not allow sin. And men may claim thus much from professors. Now, if any professor have the reputation of being

an unkind husband, a disobedient child, a tyrannical master, or a slothful servant, a busybody, a cheat, he creates prejudices and closes men's hearts against the gospel. Call not these little things. Dead flies cause the ointment to stink, especially to those who want to condemn the ointment. A mote in the Christian's eye attracts more attention than a beam in the worldling's. 2. By the peace, harmony, and brotherly love of a Church. Diversities will be found, but as in music, distinct melodies breathed by different voices constitute full harmony. And a neighbourhood knows whether a Church meets in bitterness or in love (Eccles. x. 20). The stormy wind of strife cannot be confined, nor the balmy breeze of charity. 3. By the inviting aspect of the public worship of a Church. (1) The building should accord in style and dimensions with the character and population of a neighbourhood. It should say, "Come in: there is room." (2) Sufficient light and air, and all that can make them attractive should be provided. The theatre and gin shop are attractive. (3) The mode of worship, too, is of importance—the best music, reading, preaching. 4. By Churches forming benevolent institutions in their neighbourhood, and having their representatives in institutions of a more general character: such as hospitals, societies for the relief of the poor, day schools, &c. The multitude cannot appreciate the man who is a martyr to religious opinions, but they can self-denial and kindness. **II.** LIGHT TO THE WORLD. 1. By providing and sustaining an efficient ministry, adapted to the people, and receiving the Churches' sympathy, support, and co-operation. By this means a minister is advertised. Let a Church give its ministry a good character, and let it be really good, and hearers will be gathered and souls saved. 2. By every member ministering as he hath received the gift. Is one member qualified for business? Let him serve tables. Is another capable of instructing children? Let him teach the young. Is another gifted with conversational powers? Let him visit, &c. Let every one do something. The deficiency of power in our Churches is the loss of single talents. 3. By cherishing and exercising in all things a spirit worthy of its vocation. **III.** AS SEPARATE STARS IN A CONSTELLATION, MANY GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS IN ONE HOLY PLACE, exhibiting real and essential unity. How is this to be developed? 1. By ministers and Churches guarding most carefully each other's reputation. Let not the unsuccessful be jealous of the prosperous, or the prosperous be cold towards the less favoured. Let none be ready to take up an evil report against his neighbour. 2. By co-operation for common ends. Some objects are pursued most successfully alone; but in circulation of the Scriptures, educational movements, &c., there should be association. To the tents of your tribe for fellowship, &c., but to the open camp for home and foreign missions. This will make our tents as separate dwelling-places of one spiritual army. 3. By the universal expression of pleasure in the prosperity of the successful, and of regret in the adversity of the unsuccessful (1 Cor. xii. 14–27). 4. By the contribution of assistance to all that need it (Eph. iv. 4–16). (*S. Martin.*) *Believers' lights in the world*.—1. Christian precepts have not suffered any degeneration of meaning. They would naturally be of the gentlest to those emerging from heathenism. If, then, such exhortations were delivered to the newly-converted Philippians, we ought to arrive at a high stage of Christian perfection. 2. The apostle says—(1) "Do all things." Christianity is not mere thinking or feeling, but working. (2) Without murmurings—(a) Against God's providence. (b) Against one another. Let there be no whisperings against those who ought to be esteemed among you. (c) Against the ungodly world; rather suffer in silence. (3) Without disputings. Raise not knotty points of controversy. Turn your swords against your adversaries, not against yourselves. (4) That ye may be blameless. There will be those who will blame you, but don't give them occasion to. (5) Harmless, or harmless, creatures that not only do no harm, but are incapable of any. (6) As sons of God. Dignity of relationship should beget dignity of deportment. (7) Without rebuke, whom men cannot rebuke. 3. All this is as means to an end—"that ye may shine," &c. I. PUBLICITY REQUIRED. Christians are to be "lights" and to "shine," and that not in the house, but in the "world"; hence secrecy is impossible. Beware, however, of ostentatious Phariseeism, but do not make it an excuse for cowardice. The Christian—1. Should make a public avowal of his faith, by coming out from among the world and declaring himself on the Lord's side. 2. Should be associated constantly with Christian people. One act of profession is not enough; it should be continued by union with the visible Church. The man that was healed stood with Peter and John. 3. Should daily

carry out their Christianity in their life. Do not be a display of fireworks. Let the servant outshine others by being more attentive, and the master by being more generous. 4. Should add the open testimony of words. 5. There are times when there must be a very bold and stern decision for Christ. When the old Roman senator was told by Vespasian that he might go to the senate house, but he must hold his tongue, he answered, "I, being a senator, feel impelled to go into the Senate house, and being in the Senate, it is the part of a senator to speak what his conscience dictates." "Then," said the Emperor, "if you speak you will die." "Be it known unto thee, O Emperor," said he, "that I never hoped to be immortal, nor did I ever wish to live when I might not speak my mind." This publicity may be further urged from the fact that Christians are runners and soldiers; but who runs or fights in secret? II. USEFULNESS INTENDED. We are lights—1. To make manifest. A Christian should so shine that those who come near him are able to see their own character in his life, and to know the gospel. 2. To guide. The mariner understands this. Every Christian should light some part of the voyage of life, and there should not be a channel without its light. 3. For warning. On our rocks and shoals a lighthouse is erected. There are plenty of false lights. Satan's wreckers are always abroad tempting under the name of pleasure. Let us put up the true light on every dangerous rock, and so be clear of the blood of all men. 4. For comfort. 5. For rebuking sin. The gas lamps are the best police we have. Thieves do not like the light. So Christians, when they are in sufficient numbers to act on the commonwealth, make crime less common. 6. The Christian's light, unlike the others, gives light. III. POSITION INDICATED. "Crooked," &c. This should—1. Be an incentive. The worse people are, the more need they have of your exertions. If crooked, then make them straight. 2. Administer a caution. Do not wonder if they hate your light, and try to blow it out. Be the more anxious not to give unnecessary offence. Ask Christ to keep you straight and your light burning. 3. Console you. Are you in the midst of a crooked people? So were Paul and the Philippians. IV. ARGUMENT SUGGESTED. "That I may not run," &c. (C. H. Spurgeon.) Christianity:—1. Is not a mere set of opinions which may lie dormant in the mind; but (2) a system of principles which, taking hold of the innermost springs of feeling and action, gives its own colour and character to all that proceeds therefrom. The apostle enjoins—I. NEGATIVELY, abstinence from those tempers by which Christian graces must be withered and the Christian profession dishonoured. 1. Two blades of grass cannot be found in all respects alike, so we cannot find two men alike in character and temperament. So there must be about the Christian that which distinguishes him not only from the worst, but the best, samples of unrenewed humanity. (2) With worldly persons it is enough to be irreproachable in those habits and duties which regard their fellow-men. The Christian's aim is to conform to the will of God. The Christian is anxious not only to act well, but to act on Christian principles and from Christian motives. (1) A worldly person may discover many reasons for checking a murmuring habit of mind; he may see its inutility and folly, and so determine to play the philosopher and endure what he cannot avoid. The Christian stifles every rising murmur, because he recognizes the goodness of God in all His appointments, and fulfils the hardest duties and bears the heaviest burdens, not because they are not grievous, but because he has that heaven-born faith which these trials call into exercise, and which blunts their edge and sweetens their bitterness. (2) A merely moral person may see the expediency of setting aside a spirit of contention, viz., that it disturbs social enjoyment and deadens the sympathies of friendship. Nor is a Christian wholly unbiassed by such considerations, but he cultivates a pacific spirit, because he is a follower of the Prince of Peace, and because contention cannot consist with a healthy Christian experience, and mars usefulness. II. POSITIVELY. The exhibition of Christian light. 1. Where? (1) In the sphere in which he personally moves. (2) In the sphere over which his influence extends. (a) How wide these are in the narrowest life. (b) How dark and needing illumination. 2. How? (1) By his good works. (2) By holding forth the word of life. 3. Let the millions perishing at home and abroad for lack of Christian light and influence stimulate the Christian. (T. Page, M.A.) *The inward principle and outward form of Christianity*:—Its spirit takes up and incorporates surrounding materials as a plant clothes itself with soil and climate, whilst it exhibits the workings of a vital principle within, independent of all accidental circumstances. (S. T. Coleridge.) *Negative and positive Christianity*:—He must be not only blameless, but didactic in his life; he must

not only be innocent, but "zealous of good works"; he must not only be pure, but shining. (*Jeremy Taylor*.) Inquire—I. How THINGS ARE COMMONLY DONE? II. How THEY OUGHT TO BE DONE? III. How THEY CAN BE SO DONE? (*J. Lyth D.D.*) I. THE COURSE CONDEMNED is common, humiliating, unsatisfactory. II. THE COURSE COMMENDED is possible, wise, pleasant, Christian. (*Ibid.*) *Murmurings and disputings*:—I. MURMURINGS. 1. The kinds of murmuring. (1) Against God (Rom. ix. 20). (2) Against God's providence in doing better to some than to others. This sin is many times found in David, Job, Habakkuk—"Why doth the wicked prosper?"—until they went into the sanctuary of God and understood their end (Psa. lxxiii. 17). (3) Against God's ordinance in magistracy and ministry (1 Sam. viii. 7; Titus ii. 5, 9). 2. Causes. (1) Ignorance of God's particular providence (Job xlii. 6). (2) Self-love (Numb. xvi. 3). 3. Cures. (1) Labour to have a right understanding of God's justice without all exception. (2) Of His infinite goodness to all, and particularly to His own children (Matt. x. 29). This will lead us to—(a) Justify God (Psa. cxix. 137; 1 Sam. iii. 18; 2 Cor. xx. 19; Psa. xxxix. 1). (b) Learn a holy silence (Psa. lxii. 1; Lev. x. 3). (c) Practice resignation (Luke xxii. 42). (d) Exercise gratitude. II. DISPUTINGS—1. Issue from murmurings. Murmuring requires vindication; and men are never at a loss for reasons in favour of the worst cause. This extends to duties. 2. Is a great sin. Where theology is disputed it is least practised. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Things best dropped*:—(*Children's sermon.*) Did you ever get nervous before a painted portrait? When I was a boy, there was a great oil painting hung over the fireplace of an old gentleman, with a little, sharp, cold, cruel face. But what used to frighten me most were the cold, cruel eyes. They seemed to be everywhere. If I went to the one end of the room, they followed me there; if I went to the other, they followed me. If I did anything that was wrong, they seemed to be sneering, "That is just what I expected from a boy like you!" and if I did anything right, they seemed to sneer still more, "Pah, you will very soon be doing something wrong again!" I was glad when it became too dark to see these eyes, but when the morning came, there were those eyes as unpleasant as ever! I would have been very glad to have turned that picture with its face to the wall! And would you not sometimes like to do that with this text, if it was hung up opposite you? When you are grumbling because your brother or sister got a larger piece of cake than you, or a toy bigger than yours, or when it is not your turn to be taken out, you would not like to see what God is saying to you when you are murmuring and grizzling and grudging and disputing. Yet that is what God is saying to you when you are peevish and discontented. He is saying it to make you happy. There was once a little lady who was very unhappy. She lived in a fine house, and had lots of toys and a watch, yet nothing could please her. Even the weather was never just what she wanted. It was sure to rain when she wanted it to be fine, or fine when she took out her new umbrella. From morning to night she murmured and grumbled, and was very unhappy. One day she came upon two poor children playing and having such a hearty game. "These children," she said, "are very happy. I will ask them what makes them so." So she asked the eldest boy. "I don't know, miss, what you mean," said the boy; "what's happy?" "Why," she replied, "it means bright, glad, fond of things." "Oh!" said the boy, "Jim and I are always glad; ain't we, Jim?" And the eyes of the little brother danced like sunshine upon ripples as he said, "Yes, always glad." "But what makes you so glad?" "I don't know, I'm sure, miss, except that when I try to make Jim glad I get glad myself." And that was all that he knew about the matter. But as the little lady went home she thought about it, and said to herself, "What the little boy means is this—the way to be happy is by trying to make other people happy." So she thought she would try, and all that day, instead of grumbling and murmuring and finding fault, she said, "Thank you!" with a pleasant smile; and "Don't you trouble, let me do it!" in a nice spirit; and, "Well, this task is a little difficult, but I shall manage it!" And she found that everybody got pleasanter to her, and instead of always scolding her, everybody had a kind word for her, and people who used to dislike her came to love her. So she learnt the secret of happiness. And now she has grown into a great woman, people feel better for looking at her. She has such a happy, kindly face. Try to be the same; and instead of grumbling try to make people happy. (*J. R. Howat.*) *Don't spoil your portrait.* How do you suppose that old gentleman in the picture came to have such an unpleasant look? Because all his life he must have been a grumbling man. Remember that you are now making the features you will have in

twenty years' time. There is nothing that tells on the features so much as grumbling and discontent and fault-finding. Why, the moment you look upon some people you say, "What a discontented person that is!" The way to grow beautiful is by trying, in a loving, gentle spirit, to make others happy. That was the way with Jesus. He never murmured. Sometimes He had to go without food, but He knew that His Father would not forget Him. Sometimes people said very hard things of Him, but He never murmured. He just thought, "They don't know better, poor things! if they did, they would not say such things." He was always happy, because He was always trying to make other people happy. And once you become busy in that way you won't have any time to be unhappy yourself. Pray to the dear Lord Jesus to give you His Spirit, to help you to do all things without murmurings and disputings; and the way to keep that spirit when you have got it is—try to be glad when others are glad. (*Ibid.*) *Evil of disputings*:—Do all things without "disputings." Dispute not with God; let Him do what seemeth Him good. Dispute not with your fellow-Christians, raise not railing accusations against them. When Calvin was told that Luther had spoken ill of him, he said, "Let Luther call me a devil if he please, I will never say of him but that he is a most dear and valiant servant of the Lord." Raise not intricate and knotty points by way of controversy. Remember you have adversaries upon whom to use your swords, and therefore there is little need that you should turn their edges by dashing at the armour of your fellows. Dispute not even with the world. The heathen philosophers always sought occasions for debate; be it yours to testify what God has told you, but court not controversy. Be not ashamed to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, but never do it in a spirit of mere debating, never because you wish to gain a victory, but only because you would tell out what God hath bidden you reveal. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Murmuring the cause of disputings*:—As fuel is to the fire, so are murmurings to contentions, even as the ground and matter whereout they do spring; and as the fire long covered and smothered is not always kept under, but at length bursteth forth into flame, so those concealed hatreds, howsoever for a time they lie boiling within the heart of him who fostereth them, yet do they at length show themselves in their colours, even breaking out into open strifes. It standeth upon us to strangle both mother and daughter, lest, yielding possession in our hearts to the one, we be strangled with the other. (*H. Airay, D.D.*) *The folly of contentions on the mission field*:—Captain Stephens relates this incident illustrative of the unwisdom of different denominations competing in the same community for converts. Of course success among the inhabitants of Hawaii brought other labourers into the field, and this led to the following dialogue, which is not without its instruction and warning:—"Have you different gods?" "Different gods? No, we all worship the same living and true God." "Do you have different Bibles?" "Certainly not. There is but one Bible, written by men divinely inspired." "Have you all the same Saviour?" "Yes, the same." "Well, then, with the same God, the same Saviour, and the same Bible, we cannot understand why you differ." Why should differing Christians put this stumbling-block in the way of recently converted heathens. The world is large, and the idolatrous are yet a great multitude. (*J. L. Nye.*) *Controversy hushed in the presence of heathenism*:—What a cause of thankfulness it is to be out of the din of controversy, and to find hundreds of thousands longing for crumbs which are shaken about so roughly in these angry disputes. It isn't High Church, or Low, or Broad Church, or any other special name, but the longing desire to forget all distinctions, and to return to a simpler state of things, that seems naturally to result from the very sight of heathen people. (*Bishop Patteson.*)

Ver. 15. That ye may be blameless and harmless.—*God's people*:—I. THEIR TRUE CHARACTER. II. POSITION. III. OFFICE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) I. The believer's SPHERE—in a dark world, a perverse age. II. His OFFICE—to dispense knowledge, grace, life. III. His DUTY—to hold forth, &c., by precept—example. (*Ibid.*) *The Christian in the world*:—Why is not the Christian, as soon as converted, taken to heaven? Enoch walked three hundred years with God before he was translated; Moses for forty years led Israel ere God took him to be with Himself. Our remaining in the world gives rise to the scheme of Christian duties. 1. In speaking of duties, we must remember that there is no conflict between them. They all harmonize. They are so related that we cannot fully perform any one of them without being led on to the performance of others.

2. All our duties may be classified around three centres. (1) Our duties to God. These relate (a) to worship and (b) to service. They are contained in the first table of the law. (2) Duties to our fellow-beings. These are contained in the second table of the law. (3) Duties to ourselves. These relate to securing a title to heaven and a fitness for heaven. They are practically secured when we bind the two tables of the law together. 3. Are we as Christians in the world fulfilling the plan and purpose of God? Are we blameless and harmless? Are we the sons of God? Do we shine as lights? Are we consumed with zeal for our Father's house, and are we constantly about our Father's business? (*A. H. Moment.*) *All Christians must shine*:—If I had been made a firefly, it would not become me to say, "If God had only made me a star, to shine always, then I would shine." It is my duty, if I am a firefly, to fly and sparkle, and fly and sparkle; not to shut my wings down over my phosphorescent self, because God did not make me a sun or a star. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Hiding his lamp*:—A labouring man, soon after confessing Christ and joining a Church in a rural district, had occasion to leave his home for a few weeks, to obtain work during harvest in an adjoining county. On returning home, he was congratulated by his fellow Christians, who expressed their hope that he had been able to stand firm to his profession of Christ, and the opposition and persecution to which they justly concluded he must have been subjected by the ungodly workmen with whom he had been compelled to labour. "Oh, no," he replied, "I had no persecution at all, for though I was working with them for five weeks, they never found me out." "So much the worse for you," they replied, "for if your light had shone before them, and you had borne a witness for Christ, they certainly would have found you out." *Christians are lights*:—Lights have a very cheering influence, and so have Christians. Late one night we had lost our way in a park not far from the suburbs of London, and we were walking along and wondering where we were. We said, "There is a light over there," and you cannot tell what a source of comfort that candle in a cottage window proved to us. I remember riding in a third-class carriage, crowded full of people, on a dark night, when a woman at the end of the carriage struck a match and lit a candle; with what satisfaction everybody's face was lit up, as all turned to see it. A light really does give great comfort; if you think it does not sit in the dark an hour or two. A Christian ought to be a comforter; with kind words on his lips, and sympathy in his heart, he should have a cheering word for the sons of sorrow. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Christian's carriage in the world*:—I. **BLAMELESS**. 1. This if taken generally is impossible. Even Christ did not live without blame (*Heb. xii. 3*). The best people are subject to most blame, for wicked people will quarrel with them. 2. But the meaning is so behave yourselves that you give no occasion of offence to your own conscience, or that of others. II. **HARMLESS**. The property of Christians is to do no harm, because our nature is changed. The gospel makes us tame. Among birds, the wicked are likened to ravenous eagles, the Christians to harmless doves; among beasts, the one are like lions, the other like lambs; among plants, briars—lilies. III. **Christians that are blameless and harmless are the sons of God**. 1. The ground of this is the love of God (*John i. 12; 1 John iii. 1*). 2. Those who are His sons—(1) He renews to do His will and commandments (*1 Pet. i. 16*). (2) He gives them the spirit of prayer (*Acts ix. 11*), by which we have constant access to Him (*Eph. ii. 18; iii. 8*). (3) He affords them sweet consolation (*Rom. v. 1*). (4) He saves from overmuch carefulness. 3. God's sons live without rebuke. IV. **The blameless and sons of God live in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation**. 1. The nature of this crookedness. (1) It is in the will (*Jer. xxvii. 13; Matt. xxiii. 37*). (2) In the affections. Men love their bane. (3) In the life. (4) As regards religion. 2. The signs. (1) Bring thyself to the rules of God's truth; if thou do it unwillingly and shun the means of salvation, it is a sign thou art crooked. (2) Do you tremble when the rules are applied to your lusts and corruptions. 3. The cure. (1) Obedience to God's ordinance. (2) Especially when young. (3) Keep good company. (4) Pray with the Psalmist (*Psa. cxix. 5*). 4. Why are Christians so placed? (1) God hereby shows His power in that He can and doth preserve His children among lions. (2) That condemnation of the wicked is hereby justified. They cannot say they were without good examples. (3) That ungodly men may be won. (4) That Christians may be refined. 5. Directions for Christians so placed. (1) Remember your calling as sons of God: don't disgrace it. (2) Observe the people with whom you converse. (3) Beware how you give them offence. (4) Be warned by the example of David. (5) Look to the duties of the second table. (6) Use a loving carriage towards all. V.

In the midst of this nation THE SONS OF GOD ARE TO SHINE AS LIGHTS. 1. Light is— (1) Excellent, showing the excellences of all creatures. (2) Pure. (3) A most comfortable thing in darkness. (4) A quality of the surest motion. (5) Hath a secret influence wherever it is. Herein Christians resemble light. 2. How to be a light. (1) Communicate with the chiefest light. (2) Use the means. (3) Have no connection with the unfruitful works of darkness. (4) Follow the example of those that He lights. (5) Pray that thy light may grow more and more unto the perfect day. (6) Enlighten thy brethren. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) Harmless.— This word probably means sincere, that is to say, pure, not mixed, not sophisticated, that is entirely of one kind, without the true and natural constitution having been altered by anything foreign. And it appears that, to set forth this simplicity and sincerity, God formerly forbade His ancient people to plant a vineyard with different kinds of plants, and to unite under the same yoke animals of different species, and to clothe themselves with a cloth of linen and woollen mixed together, to teach us by the enigma of these figures that He hates a mind and life double and variegated, in the composition of which enters vice and virtue, good and evil, piety and superstition. He wishes us to be entirely Christians, and that there should be nothing strange in the whole range of our conversation; that the outside and the inside should be of the same nature, the one exactly corresponding to the other; that the form, colour, and substance of our lives should be simple, and not mixed. And although this virtue is very extended, it may, nevertheless, be referred to four principal heads. I. WITHOUT HYPOCRISY BEFORE GOD, acknowledging and confessing ourselves such in His presence as we are in truth, without lessening the good which there is, without also hiding interior defects with the paint and false colouring of our artifices, imitating the coarse fraud of our first father, who, having renounced the naked simplicity in which he had been formed, wished to disguise himself before that sovereign Majesty by covering himself with fig-leaves. II. NOT TO COUNTERFEIT BEFORE MEN, giving up frauds, pretences, and dissimulations, crooked and equivocal ways, which the people of the world use, to make their neighbours believe of them the contrary of what they really are. III. GENTLENESS AND MEEKNESS OF MIND; it is not easily irritated, or if irritation should sometimes arise, it is soon appeased, and in reality loses the remembrance of the offences that have been committed against it. IV. FREEDOM FROM CURIOSITY; it only employs itself on its own business; and, entirely turned within, does not observe very carefully what passes without, from whence it is neither suspicious nor distrustful. (*J. Daillé.*)

The sons of God.—1. There was nothing strange to the ear of a heathen in this title. The gods of the Gentiles were fabled to be the parents of earthy heroes, the fathers of races. One belief of man stands out in all ages, that man and God are related as no creature is related to either God or man. 2. Communion on some level man would have, and so the gods of the Gentiles played the part of the murderer, the adulterer, &c. "Sons of God blameless and harmless" was quite a new collocation of ideas. The sons of God up to that time had been too largely the tyrants, deceivers, roysterers of the world. 3. The atheism of the times was largely a reaction against these degrading conceptions. The mind of all thoughtful men was thoroughly unsettled when Christ appeared, and by living as the Son of God effected a revolution. The seed of this revolution is in vers. 5-11. God dwelt among men at last not corrupting, thieving, or destroying, but healing, purifying, blessing. The end of God is to surround Himself with sons after this pattern. I. SONS OF GOD: THE NATURE OF THIS RELATIONSHIP. 1. The sons of God are clearly distinguished from the world. It is a title which man as man has no right to share. 2. But how does this square with the doctrine of universal Fatherhood taught, *e.g.*, in Heb. ii? Children and sons are not co-ordinate there. The latter is higher than the former, although the former is the base out of which the latter is evolved. In the home the natural relation is one thing, and confers certain rights and claims. The spiritual relationship is another, that is the condition of the child as a being of will, thought, and affection with regard to the parent. And so man may be a child of the Great Parent, but sensual, rebellious. To such God fulfils a Father's duties and feels a Father's sorrows; but sons they are not until the spirit of sonship be in them. 3. This is what regeneration means. It is the carrying up the child's relation through all the higher powers and faculties, and yielding to God the child complete (Pet. ii. 1-11; 1 John iii. 1-4). It is in view of this that our Saviour delivers to Nicodemus the deepest doctrine of His kingdom. The new birth is the only way by which the unfilial child can pass into the freedom, joy, and spiritual life of the son. II. THE MANIFESTATION OF SONSHIP

AND ITS FRUITS. 1. Blameless and harmless (1 Pet. ii. 18-25; iii. 6-18; iv. 12-19). Goodness is the most powerful appeal to man. Revenge may terrify, but forgiveness will awe and control. In the multitude there is a hidden sense of the beauty of goodness that only wants appealing to by some act of goodness. Bold men stood and trembled before an agonized child as they never trembled before the foe. Why? Because goodness, patience, faith, are heavenly. 2. There is nothing exclusive in this sonship—"Holding forth the word of life," that men may live also. The sons are to be magnets to draw the children to the Father, that they may be received as sons. (*Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *Insincere professors*:—As you see that in the world art counterfeits precious stones and drugs, exchanging them for others of little value, which they pass off for good by favour of some apparent resemblance which they have to the true; so also in the Church there has always been found a number of cheats, who, deceiving themselves and others, take the colour and form of the children of God, although in reality they are not so. And as there are certain means by which adulterated goods, such as the gold and stones of alchemy, are discerned from the true; so also in religion there are marks and certain proofs whereby those may be known who have only the name of the children of God from those who are so in reality. Those who sustain these trials, and in whom are really found all these marks, are they whom the apostle here very elegantly calls "children of God, without rebuke;" those whom the crucible cannot make to blush; those in whom neither the calumny nor the cunning of the enemy can find anything to lay hold of; such as the Scripture sets forth in a Job, who confounded all the artifices of Satan, and justified most fully by his trials the glorious testimony which God had condescended to bear to him with His own mouth. (*J. Dailé.*) In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.—As naturalists say that there are rivers which run through lakes without mingling their waters with them, may we flow together in this world without uniting in its ways, preserving all the colour, strength, and substance of our Divine source; may we be truly that people of God, of which Balaam formerly said, "They shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations;" always strangers in the world, although living on the earth, and breathing its air; floating in the midst of its waters without being confounded with them; walking in its fires without being burnt; constantly remaining upright, perfect, sincere, and unrebukable in the midst of all its obliquities and perversities. (*Ibid.*) *Children of God without rebuke* *Moral courage*:—When the late Commodore Foote was in Siam he had, upon one occasion, the king on board his vessel as a guest. Like a Christian man as he was, he did not hesitate in the royal presence to ask a blessing as the guests took their places at the table. "Why, that is just as the missionaries do," remarked the king, with some surprise. "Yes," answered the heroic sailor, "and I am a missionary too." (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Shining Christians*:—A friend told me that he was visiting a lighthouse lately, and said to the keeper, "Are you not afraid to live here? It is a dreadful place to be constantly in." "No," replied the man; "I am not afraid. We never think of ourselves here." "Never think of yourselves! How is that?" The reply was a good one. "We know that we are perfectly safe, and only think of having our lamps burning brightly, and keeping the reflectors clear, that those in danger may be saved." Christians are safe in a house built on a Rock, which cannot be moved by the wildest storm, and in a spirit of holy unselfishness they should let their light gleam across the dark waves of sin, that imperilled ones may be guided into the harbour of heaven. (*Ibid.*) *Shine for others*:—Unless we let our light shine we are hidden from recognition, and may be only stumbling-blocks. A blind beggar, sitting on a side-walk one dark night, had a bright lantern by his side. Whereat a passer-by was so puzzled that he had to turn back with, "What do you keep a lantern burning for? You can't see." "So that folks may not stumble over me," was the reply. We should keep our light burning for the sake of others as well as for the good of being in the light ourselves. (*J. L. Nye.*) *Christian influence*:—When Lord Peterborough lodged for a season with Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray, he was so delighted with his piety and virtue that he exclaimed at parting, "If I stayed here any longer, I should become a Christian in spite of myself."

Ver. 16. *Holding forth the word of life.*—Here is—I. A TRUST. The Word of God—which gives life. II. A DUTY. To hold it forth in the conversation, spirit, practice. III. A MOTIVE. Your salvation and our joy—in the day of Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The word of life*:—The gospel is here thus called (John vi. 68; Acts v.

20), because—I. BY IT WE ARE BORN INTO A NEW LIFE (1 Pet. i. 23). II. IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION (2 Cor. ii. 16). III. THEREIN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR LIFE, IS OFFERED TO US. IV. IT IS A LANTERN TO OUR FEET TO LEAD US TO ETERNAL LIFE. (*H. Airay, D.D.*) *The Bible*:—I. IS THE WORD OF LIFE; it reveals, promises, communicates life. II. MUST BE HELD FORTH by every believer, by word and example, for his own credit, the world's benefit, God's glory. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Holding forth the word of life*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL. It is the word of life, because—1. It unfolds the certainty of a blessed immortality. Reason has nothing to report except speculations and probabilities; as witness the conclusions of Socrates and Cicero. The gospel brings life and immortality to light. 2. It exhibits Christ who is essential life Himself, the Author of life natural, spiritual, and eternal. Hence He is called "The Life;" and "He that hath the Son hath life," implying previous "death in trespasses and sins." By faith the believer "passes from death unto life." 3. It is the instrument of the Spirit in communicating life. "Of His own will begat He us," &c., "born not of corruptible seed," &c. It is also the means of sustaining life and maturing it. II. THE MANNER OF ITS EXHIBITION. Holding it forth. What the lighthouse is to the mariner the gospel is to a dark world. 1. Ministers are bound to hold it forth to their congregations as the only sure ground of hope, and adequate means of salvation. Can they with this in their hands amuse them with other topics, or inculcate a lifeless morality? 2. Christians are individually and collectively to hold it forth in their lives for the instruction of mankind. Men are unable to judge of any system save by its practical effects, and few will fail to appreciate a holy life. 3. Our country is bound to hold it forth to heathen nations. (*D. Ruell.*) *Holding forth the word of life*:—I. BE SURE THAT YOU HAVE THE TRUTH. You cannot hold forth what you do not possess. Business to be honest must have actual stock or capital. Our commercial and agricultural circles have been and are now disturbed by gambling in "deals" and "futures." Thousands of barrels of oil that never existed, and millions of bushels of grain that never were harvested, have been made the basis of mere speculation. Mortgage and ruin have overtaken multitudes in this illegitimate traffic. There is a godless spiritualism, a Christless Unitarianism, and a Scriptureless "new theology," which, however curious they may be, have no breath or life in them for a hungry soul. You might as well send a starving man to a bucket-shop for bread as to satisfy your soul with such speculations. The wife of Abraham made cakes for the angels. There have been improvements in bread-making since Sarah's day, but nobody yet has been able to make bread without flour. You must have the grain to begin with, and so you must have the truth, the bread of life, before you attempt to feed the famine of the soul. II. BE SURE THAT YOU HAVE IT UNADULTERATED. Commissions have discovered food adulterations. Innutritious if not poisonous matter has been mixed with wholesome flour, cheapening and degrading it. So the truth has been vitiated by a mixture of philosophy, tradition, &c. It fails to nourish starving souls. The best test of purity is its effect on your own life. Daniel tested the wholsomeness of his coarse pulse, and showed a fairer hue than those who fed on royal dainties. III. BE SURE THAT YOU YOURSELVES ARE LIVING EPISTLES OF WHAT YOU INTELLECTUALLY HOLD. It is not the printed book that does the work, but the truth which has become the vital texture of your soul. We have a revised version of the Bible for which we are thankful, but every Christian should be a new transcript, a walking word of God. A military man sees at a glance whether a soldier has been trained under old or new schools. Men are not slow to detect whether or not you have been trained by Christ. IV. HOW TO HOLD THE TRUTH. 1. Not as the miser holds his gold, but hold to give. The merchant gets to give. He is ruined if he cannot sell, and his goods are left to spoil. We ought to be as anxious to disperse as to acquire. 2. Lovingly. Tact is needed in business. Anybody can buy, but to sell is another thing. I once asked a salesman why he was so talkative to one customer and so taciturn to another, and he said that he had always studied character, and knew very quickly how to handle men. 3. Constantly. Notice the present participle in the text, and the continuous action implied. You cannot cover up the Christian character and live. It must have breath. In descending into deep wells, men first lower a candle. If it goes out, they know that death damps are there. No sane person would risk asphyxia. There are places in which no Christian ought to risk himself, because death is there. He will not go to drinking-saloons, and other places I need not mention. It is not the darkness there that harms, any more than in the deep well, but it is the death-

damps! 4. Have confidence in the Word as God's own message. It is His Word. He will give it success. He ordered the serpent of brass. It mattered not about the pole, whether it were rough or smooth, crooked or straight, large or small, low or high, so that the people could see it. All men had to do was just to look and live. A man once kept on his parlour mantel an ugly oyster-shell. When asked why that incongruous thing was there, he told the story of his earlier years. He was a diver. Once he saw a shell in which was held a bit of paper. He took it to the surface, carried it home, deciphered it, and found it a part of a gospel tract. It was blessed to his salvation. The shell was reverently preserved, because it had silently "held forth the word of life" to him who had long neglected the appeals from human lips. (*A. Blackburn, D.D.*) *Holding forth the word of life*:—I. IT IS YOUR BUSINESS TO HOLD FORTH THE WORD

OF LIFE. Your work on earth is not done when you have saved yourself from an untoward generation. You have to hold your lamps as far in as you can into the dark mass around. God does not call you to a timid, fugitive, skulking piety; a religion which has to lock its doors and bar its windows. There is a part of it which has to do with this. Our lamp must be kindled, trimmed, and fed, in secret. But the office of the lamp is to shine. II. BY WHAT MEANS? 1. By example. Let men see how you live. No one can set limits to the operation of a consistent example. Men are never too old or too young to be struck by it. 2. By sympathy. There is a dry, cold, harsh, stern, mode of expressing the truth; and there is a repulsive, ungenial, precise, stiff, sort of example which never leads men, seeing its good works, to glorify God. Let a man, a child, see that you feel for him and with him in his poverty or sorrow, and not as a superior might do, but as one compared with infirmity. III. PRACTICAL COUNSELS. Much is lost in spiritual as well as in worldly things, by too vague and discursive an aim. As long as we think generally of shining as lights in the world there will be something of unreality in the conception. Let us make the matter more practical by narrowing the bounds. 1. Begin with the home. Is all right there? Remember that those within your own doors see you as none else can. 2. Let each one have a few poor persons to whom he will steadily set himself to carry the word of life. (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Christian influence:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE. As a standard bearer holds out an ensign to direct the march or animate the attack; as a man who holds forth a clear light in the midst of darkness to illuminate the path and direct the steps of travellers; as the fires which were kept burning at the entrance of harbours to direct ships into port, so are Christians to hold forth the light of life. It is to be held forth in—1. Its great and distinguishing doctrines. These are the nerves and sinews of the Word. They must be understood intelligently, and defended valiantly. "Be always ready to give an answer for the hope that is in you." 2. In its peculiar spirit. This distinguishes the gospel from every other religious system. It is a spirit of love to God and man (ver. 5). 3. In its practice. The imitation of Christ, obedience, self-denial. 4. Eminently, conspicuously. II. MOTIVES TO ENFORCE THIS DUTY. 1. The nature and design of the gospel demand this. 2. This is the best means of high Christian attainment. 3. This is the most effective means of usefulness. (*J. Hanes, D.D.*)

Holding forth the light:—When I was a young student, I breakfasted with Cæsar Malan at Dr. John Brown's. When the doctor told him that I was a young student of divinity, he said to me, "Well, my young friend, see that you hold up the lamp of truth to let the people see. Hold it up and trim it well. But remember this: You must not dash the lamp in people's faces, that would not help them to see." How often have I remembered these words! They have often been of use to me. (*Dr. Morison.*)

Christians are light-bearers:—At the head of New York Harbour stands a colossal statue of Liberty, a gift from France to America. At night the outstretched hand of the figure holds forth a magnificent display of the electric light, which guides the ships to a safe anchorage. What that statue is to New York Harbour Christians are to the world. They must hold forth the word of life. (*R. Brewin.*)

Exposure of light-bearers:—Some years ago I went to see the light-house, which, standing on Dunnet Head—the Cape Orcus of the Romans—guards the mouth of Pentland Firth. On ascending the tower, I observed the thick plate-glass windows of the lantern cracked—starred in a number of places. I turned to the keeper for an explanation. It appears that it is done by stones flung up by the sea. The wave, on being thrown forward against the cliff, strikes it with such tremendous force as to hurl the loose stones at its base right up to the height of three hundred feet. So are the great light-bearers, by the exposure of their posi-

tion, and, in spite of the elevation of their characters, liable to be cracked and starved by the violence of the world. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The prosperity of the pastor, the prosperity of his flock* :—As in the world a fine and fruitful flock is the riches of the shepherd, an honest and well conducted family the joy and honour of the father, a happy and flourishing state the strength and glory of the prince; so also in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, a holy and blessed Church, abounding in the fruits of righteousness, is the crown, the joy, and the triumph of its pastors. (*J. Daillé.*)

Vers. 17-18. **IF I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith.**—Observe—I. **THE SACRIFICE OF FAITH.** Christ is the only true sacrifice, faith offers it—every one must offer it for himself. II. **THE LIBATION.** The blood of the martyrs—joyfully offered—in defence of the truth, and for the confirmation of our faith. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The law of the Christian life* :—The sacrifices of the Jews were not all sombre ceremonials. A solemn oppression rested on the people on the great day of Atonement; and it was not until the High Priest returned from the Most Holy Place, and proclaimed by His presence that the ceremonial was ended, that the people were able to breathe in gladness again. But there was one special festival which was of a joyous character—the whole burnt offering, or “splendour” offering, which was an expression of gratitude to God for His goodness. This was the service in which beasts in multitude smoked upon the altar, and wine was poured out in libation. It was to this that the apostle here refers. He delighted to think of humanity as presented in offering to the most Holy One—all presenting to God their faith and sacrifice, and to have part in such service was his highest joy. Life itself might be freely poured out upon it in libation. Christian history furnishes us with the reality of these two types. When the Saviour hung on Calvary, the sin-offering, there was no room for any but solemn accessories. “There was darkness,” &c.; but when He returned the whole spirit of piety was altered and enlarged. Sadness gave way to joy; death, suffering, endurance, became charged with joyous inspiration; so that the very word “sacrifice” took on a new significance. I. **IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE THERE MUST BE SACRIFICE.** 1. This is the law of Christian life. “If any man will come after me,” &c. 2. It is the impulse of Christian affection. “Enough for the disciple to be as his Lord.” 3. It is the revelation of a higher righteousness. “It is better to suffer,” &c., because “Christ also suffered the just,” &c. 4. It is the assurance of triumph and the way to spiritual influence. “If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him.” (1) The spirit of sacrifice is the possession of all Christians. (2) But there are those whose suffering is more conspicuous than that of others. Men foremost in office. “The Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” These draw most opposition. The qualities which make them worthy of confidence mark them out. Duty demands that they should be faithful in times of danger; and in times of peace they find room to offer themselves. A long life spent in Christ’s cause is as truly poured out as that which is cut short by the axe. (3) There are others who, by a necessity of their being, cannot serve without sacrificing themselves. There is feeling in all their labour, and feeling wears out more than toil. II. **FAITH KNOWS HOW TO VINDICATE AND APPROVE THE LAW OF SACRIFICE.** 1. The cause of humanity is justly held to vindicate all the sacrifices that individual men can make to it. That story of Marcus Curtius, who threw himself into the gulf opened in the forum at Rome, is one of the noblest legends of history. Now and then we are thrilled by records of shipwreck, how that officers stand on the quarter-deck and go down with the ship. To what purpose is this waste? The cause of humanity demands it, and he would be a dastard who would count his own life dearer than that of the tiniest child. The gifted must not alone enjoy their gifts, but lay them out in the service of the undistinguished. 2. The Christian cause is the cause of man. Philanthropy has drawn its inspiration from the life of Christ. What was the sacrifice of which the apostle speaks, and which missionaries offer? To free the heathen from their licentiousness, to throw a new glory on the lot of the slave, to light the pathway of the dying, to raise woman from her degradation, &c., &c. Whatever be the talk about humanity, the opportunity for serving it must be sought in the fellowship of Christ. 3. The service of Christian faith contemplates not only humanity but also God. III. **THE SACRIFICE OF FAITH IS A COMMON SACRIFICE.** Paul aims to draw the Philippians into the fellowship of his own sacrificial ecstasy, and assumes that they are already in sympathy with him. He speaks of himself as the libation only, and of them as the sacrifice. He calls it

the sacrifice and liturgy of their faith. 1. It is to their service that he is devoted; how, then, could they do other than join with him in the sacrificial spirit which possesses him. They cannot blame the enthusiasm which carried him into danger at Rome when they remembered the vision of the man of Macedonia. 2. It was their cause because it was the cause of Christ, and they were Christians. The same law and sacrifice was binding on them and on him; they would be as ready as he to be offered if the same call should come. Here are two thoughts which should reconcile us to sacrifice, particularly when witnessed in others. (1) We are debtors for all we have to others. The woman experiencing the pangs of motherhood and the anxiety of a family is paying her debt to humanity, for she, too, once rested beneath a mother's heart. The man toiling for his fellows is the son of a toil-worn generation. (2) It is in us to offer ourselves when called upon. There is no tale of manful endurance or womanly self-devotion that does not thrill us. Why? Because of sympathy. It is only the expression of a common passion. There are differences of gifts, but it is the same spirit. The sacrifice of the missionary warrants and inspires our sacrifice. (*A. Mackennal, D.D.*) *The spirit of the martyrs*:—I. FAITH. They died in faith for the faith. II. Love—to Christ and His cause—to the brethren. III. Joy, in the prospect of glory, of the benefit derived by the Church. IV. TRIUMPH over persecution and death. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Christian service*:—I. THE SACRIFICE. The Jewish sacrifices were propitiatory and eucharistic. Our Lord by the offering of Himself once for all has fulfilled the former, but Christians are “to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually,” “to present their bodies living sacrifices,” and “with such God is well pleased.” 1. All sacrifices involve something given up. Thus we say a man “sacrificed half his fortune;” a father “sacrificed his time for his son.” 2. Faith is here represented as a sacrifice, because out of it all other sacrifices spring—love, zeal, liberality. Is our faith such? Do we in it surrender anything really valued? Does it cost us a struggle? If not, may we not suspect that it is a mere assent to doctrine. 3. Real faith is sacrifice, inasmuch as it is a renunciation of pride. (1) The pride of reason. Reason loves to elaborate for itself, but the gospel claims to be believed. Its absolute authority, its simplicity, its mysteries, are all hateful to intellectual arrogance. (2) The pride of self-righteousness. There is a great proneness to dream that eternal life may be earned. With this the spirit of the gospel will not suit; for the reality and universality of sinfulness, and our utter inability to satisfy the claims of the Divine law, and the absolute gratuitousness of salvation are its very essence. (3) The pride of self-will (ver. 5, &c.). II. THE PRIESTLY SERVICE CONNECTED WITH THE SACRIFICE. 1. The New Testament recognizes but one priest in the strict sense of the word, but by a figurative application of the name, Christians are priests as by “the unction of the Holy One. Set apart from the world for the service of God, “a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices.” Such a spiritual sacrifice was the Philippians’ faith. 2. In speaking of this faith St. Paul introduces a variation of the ordinary figure, to bring out the relation between him and them. His labours had been blessed to their conversion and advancement, and thus had been a kind of priestly service. Through the spiritual energy given them from heaven, they brought faith and love as a free-will offering to God; and the apostle’s part in the work, his teachings, and prayers, corresponded with the priestly act of laying the offering on the altar (Rom. xv. 15–16). 3. See, then, the comprehensive work of the Christian priest. He is called on to present his whole life by personal holiness, and also to bring other men to God and help them onward. This work belongs to all Christians. 4. The apostle thought it not unlikely that he should close his relations with his converts by a violent death. This would be his “being offered” (*lit.*, poured forth) the libation or drink-offering by which his priestly service connected with their sacrifice of faith should be completed. The apostle’s joy in this prospect is very sublime, and is a magnificent proof of the sustaining power of the Christian faith. The sources of Christian joy in prospect of martyrdom are two-fold. (1) The confident hope of glory. (2) The knowledge that glory will accrue to God. 5. In this the joy was mutual. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) *The joy of the Church in her martyrs and confessors*:—I. IN THEIR FAITHFUL TESTIMONY AND NOBLE TRIUMPH. II. IN THE CONFIRMATION OF THE FAITH AND ITS CONSEQUENT DIFFUSION. III. IN THE ENCOURAGEMENT AFFORDED BY THEIR EXAMPLE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Priest and sacrifice*:—In the first place, he compares himself to a priest, and sets before us the conversion of the Philippians to the faith of the gospel, brought about by his preaching, and their piety as its consequence, under the image of a sacrifice. He speaks in the same way in Rom. xv. 16. In this

mystical sacrifice the apostle was the high priest; the gospel was, as it were, the knife with which he spiritually immolated his victims. The Philippian converted to Jesus Christ were his victims; for as also the ancient priests consecrated to God the victims that they offered, so also the apostle, and all the faithful preachers of the gospel, lead and offer to the Lord those to whom they preach the word with effect. Besides, as the priests of old put their victims to death, so now do the ministers of the gospel in some manner immolate men who receive their preaching, making them die to the world and the flesh, drawing out of their hearts vain affections and lusts, in which their life consisted. And as for the ancient victims, they remained purely and simply dead, without receiving from the hand of the priest any kind of life instead of that of which he had deprived them. But it is not so with the men whom the ministers of the Lord immolate with the sword of His gospel. For instead of this miserable, earthly, and carnal life which they take from them, they clothe them with another that is holy and Divine, changing them by this mystical sacrifice from children of Adam into children of God, from old and perishing creatures into new and heavenly men. Besides this difference, there is still another. For whereas those poor animals, destitute as they were of reason and intellect, suffered death simply, without any act on their part; now the victims of Jesus Christ are only immolated when they knowingly and willingly receive the stroke of the gospel. Thus you see that the apostle here expressly mentions the faith of the Philippians, as it was through that they had been offered to God. From whence again a third difference arises between these two kinds of victims. For whereas the ancient victims remained entirely deprived of their being, without obtaining any new one; men now offered to God by the gospel, besides being made by it new creatures, become also themselves priests, to offer themselves henceforth to God, by a true faith, presenting their bodies to him in sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 5). And this is the reason that the Scripture honours with the name of sacrifices all those actions of their spiritual life which they practise in faith, as their alms-giving, their repentance, their patience, their hymns, their prayers, and such like. St. Paul comprehends here all those spiritual oblations under the name of sacrifice and service of faith of the Philippians. (*J. Daillé.*) *The joy of martyrdom*:—The Greeks of old delighted to tell how Phidippides—fleetest of foot among his countrymen—having borne himself gallantly in the great fight at Marathon, darted from the field immediately after victory was secure, ran to Athens, related his tidings to the fathers of the city, closing with the words, "Rejoice ye, as we rejoice," and then, utterly exhausted by wounds and toil, fell down dead before them. The entire sinking of the thought or care of self in joy over the safety and glory of his native land was very beautiful. Yet the noblest feelings which arise out of any of the relations of man to what is earthly and visible, make but a feeble approach to the grandeur of spirit of him who "joys" to think of dying a cruel death, that the unseen God, the God whom he knows by faith only, may thereby be glorified. Paul believed that "out of the eater would come forth meat; and out of the strong, sweetness,"—that from the place of his martyrdom there would exhale a rich fragrance of Christ, which would bring spiritual joy to many souls;—and therefore he would gladly "endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) *The kindled torch*:—Perhaps one of the closest parallels with the apostle's spirit and word is that of the venerable Latimer, as at the stake in front of Balliol College at Oxford he encouraged his younger companion in tribulation, Ridley: "Be of good cheer, brother! We shall this day kindle such a torch in England as by the blessing of God shall never be extinguished." (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*) William Tyndale, the grandest figure, perhaps, take him all in all, of the English Reformation—a man of Pauline strength of character and singleness of devotion to the work which God had given him to do—suffered martyrdom in circumstances of such seclusion that we know scarcely anything more than the mere fact. But no information of his demeanour in the dungeon of Vilvorde could possibly either tell us more of his character, or speak more weightily for Christ to any one who has ears to hear, than these words, written years before, in his preface to "The Parable of the Wicked Mammon,"—"Some man will ask, peradventure, why I take the labour to make this work, inasmuch as they will burn it, seeing they burned the gospel. I answer, In burning the New Testament they did none other thing than that I looked for; no more shall they do if they burn me also, if it be God's will it shall so be. Nevertheless, in translating the New Testament I did my duty, and so do I now, and will do as

much more as God hath ordained me to do." (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) Luigi Pascali, pastor of the Waldenses in Calabria, being condemned to death after the horrors of a long captivity, and but a little while before his death by fire, was visited by his brother. The spectacle he presented in consequence of his sufferings caused his brother to fall powerless when he attempted to embrace him. But as the visitor has himself told us, the martyr exclaimed, "My brother, if you are a Christian, why do you allow yourself to be thus cast down? Do you not know that not a single hair can fall from our heads without the will of God? Trust in Jesus and take courage. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." "These are the feelings of my heart," wrote the martyr; "My faith becomes stronger as the hour approaches, when I am to be offered as a sweet-smelling sacrifice unto Christ. Yes, my joy is so lively that I can fancy I see my fetters broken, and I would be ready to brave a thousand deaths, were that necessary for the cause of truth." To his betrothed wife, Carnilla Guarina, whom he was to see no more, he wrote, "My love to you increases with my love to God. The more I have suffered the more progress I have made in the Christian religion, and the more also have I loved you. Console yourself in Jesus Christ. May your life be a copy of His." (*M. Bounet.*)

Vers. 19-30. I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly.—*Christian friendship*—I. IS FOUNDED IN THE FAITH OF CHRIST. II. CONCERNS ITSELF FOR THE STATE OF OTHERS. III. IS UNSELFISH. IV. IS PROVED BY FAITHFUL SERVICE. V. SURVIVES DIFFICULTIES. VI. ABOUNDS IN WANT, SICKNESS, SORROW. VII. FORGETS ITS SORROW IN THE JOY OF OTHERS. VIII. CAN SACRIFICE LIFE ITSELF. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian mutual happiness* :—The solicitude of the apostle was evinced—**I. BY WHAT HE HOPES TO DO.** 1. To send Timothy. (1) That he may carry good news to them. (2) That he may be of spiritual profit to them. (3) That he may bring back tidings from them. 2. To visit them himself. This is contingent (1) upon the Lord's will; (2) upon his release from imprisonment. **II. BY WHAT HE HAS ALREADY DONE** in sending Epaphroditus to them. Paul sent them their own messenger. 1. A man of the highest worth. 2. For his (Epaphroditus') improvement: he had been sick, and greatly longed to see them. 3. For their joy at his return with tidings of a mission successfully accomplished (and as the bearer of this Epistle). 4. For his (Paul's) own comfort therein. **III. AND BY WHAT HE HOPES WILL BE THEIR CONDUCT TOWARD Epaphroditus.** 1. To receive him in the Lord with all gladness. 2. To hold him in reputation, *i.e.*, honour him. 3. Because his accomplished mission showed him to be worthy of all. **IV. FIVE REFLECTIONS.** 1. Well-wishers are to be determined and judged by their ability to perform. 2. We ought to think of the comfort of others as well as of our own. 3. Faithful ministers are worthy of esteem and honour, and especially missionaries. 4. A self-sacrificing spirit is the highest and loveliest trait of character that man can reach and possess. 5. Epaphroditus, through the loveliness of his character (he had not been misnamed), his courage, consistency, zeal, and unselfishness, in six verses of an epistle (his only mention) acquires an immortality of fame that a Cæsar might covet. Goodness is true greatness, and exalts its possessor to the stars. (*L. O. Thompson.*) *Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus* :—**I. PAUL** is the chief figure in the group. 1. He is a prisoner, hoping and strongly expecting to be free, but not so sure whether his liberty will lead him out again on earth or usher him into heaven. Still his hope is that before long he will be with his friends. Meantime has come a messenger from Philippi with help and messages of affection. He desires not simply to send an acknowledgment—any messenger could take that—but to send some one who would help them in the highest sense. 2. Here in Rome are a number of persons who in general capability are quite equal to the service, and we can imagine the question put to them as they came to Saul's lodging—"Will you go to Philippi? It is of great consequence that evils should be checked and that spiritual knowledge and strength should be increased. Will you go?" "No," says one. "The journey is hard and perilous, and success uncertain." "No," says another. "Not that I have any fear, but I prefer Rome. I can be as useful here as at Philippi." "No," says a third. "I prefer home." And so the chain is heavier on Paul's wrist, as he writes, "All seek their own," &c. 3. This, then, is the dark group we have to look at first. They are unnamed, happily. The term "all," is limited to those who were asked, and it is a verdict not on character but in relation to one point of duty. But the failure was a great one. It cannot be a light thing for a Christian to thus shrink from duty, and to fall by our own choice

from the highest and best service. Each of us has some Philippi. It may be some ordinary place or plain service, but whatever tests purity of motive and strength of principle is as great as an apostolic mission. The essence of New Testament teaching is life in Christ and for men. To the uttermost He saves; to the uttermost we are to serve. II. Here is TIMOTHY; he will go. There is no man minded like him. He is Paul's other self. You go into a gallery of pictures, and they are all good in some way; but perhaps out of many hundreds only two or three approach the highest mark. So every Christian has the light of God on him, but how few shine with unwavering lustre: ready for every call of duty. Some lines in this picture are worthy of note. 1. Timothy has grown into this perfectness from his youth. No moral excellence is achieved suddenly. If you want to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ you must enter the service early. If you want to be fit for anything to which God may call you, begin at once and work your way up. When you are ready the call will come. 2. Another line is obedience. A good many years have passed since Paul found him at Derbe, but he has been "serving" all the time. No doubt before now he has been master to many, but he has never ceased to be a servant. Leave it to others to command, speculate, dispute in the gospel, or even to rest in it and enjoy it. A nobler and more fruitful use is to serve in it. 3. Another line is sonship. This relation is more than once referred to. "I have no man who will naturally," i.e., as a birthright. III. The third figure is EPAPHRODITUS, pastor of the Philippian Church, bearer of a precious gift, brother, companion, fellow-soldier. 1. He gave himself to the work in Rome with such eagerness that his health was undermined. The apostle could smite a sorcerer and heal the father of Publius, but he could not raise up a dear fellow-labourer. Miracle power was for public uses, not private satisfactions. Those who preach the cross must bear it. 2. At length, after many fears and prayers, danger passes away. With convalescence came home-sickness and a desire to relieve the anxiety of friends. Conclusion: We have been in good company. Imagination may depict the scene in Paul's chamber; but revelation has given us the moral portraiture. The lessons we may learn in such society are—1. The importance of a sincere and thorough self-denial in the Christian character. 2. The exceeding beauty of a consecrated life. 3. The use and value of suffering. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The mission of Timothy* exhibits—I. THE MISSIONARY PRINCIPLE. 1. Trust in Christ. 2. A concern for the condition of others. II. THE KIND OF AGENCY TO BE EMPLOYED. 1. Earnest. 2. Unselfish. 3. Tried. III. THE COURSE OF ACTION TO BE PURSUED. 1. Prompt. 2. Wise. 3. Believing. 4. Persevering. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) Christian intercourse. I. IS SANCTIFIED BY FAITH. II. SWEETENED BY FAITH. III. REPLETE WITH COMFORT. (*Ibid.*) *The value of a true comforter*:—Happy is the man who has that in his soul which acts upon the dejected as April airs upon violet roots. Gifts from the hand are silver and gold, but the heart gives that which neither silver nor gold can buy. To be full of goodness, full of cheerfulness, full of sympathy, full of helpful hope, causes a man to carry blessings of which he is himself as unconscious as a lamp is of its own shining. Such a one moves on human life as stars move on dark seas to bewildered mariners; as the sun wheels, bringing all the seasons with him from the south. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Vers. 20-21. **FOR I HAVE NO MAN LIKE-MINDED.**—*The care of a good pastor for his people*:—I. EVERY GOOD MINISTER FEELS A TENDER CONCERN FOR THE GOOD OF HIS PEOPLE. Every good minister is—1. A good man; and therefore has a spirit of benevolence. 2. Has experienced a saving change, and is therefore anxious for the salvation of others. 3. Has grown in grace himself, and is consequently desirous to promote the spiritual good of others. II. WHY THIS IS TRUE OF EVERY GOOD MINISTER. Because—1. He realizes that God has committed the flock into his hands, and, for a time, suspended their present and future good upon his care and fidelity. 2. Because his people have committed themselves to his pastoral watch and care. 3. Because he freely and solemnly engages to be their spiritual guide and watchman. 4. Because he knows that his interest is inseparably connected with theirs. 5. Because he views their eternal interests as inseparably connected with the eternal interests of Christ. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *Missionary agency*:—I. THE MEN WANTED. Those like-minded with the apostle, men of earnest, spontaneous, self-denying zeal. II. THE SCARCITY OF THEM. 1. Manifest. 2. Humiliating. 3. Admonitory. III. THE REASON OF IT. 1. Selfish aims. 2. Want of love to Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Concern for the spiritual wants of men*:—I. THE SITUATION OF MANKIND. From a spiritual point of view this is such as to

awaken the unaffected concern of good men. II. THE RARITY OF THOSE WHO CARE FOR THE SPIRITUAL STATE OF OTHERS. 1. They were rare in Paul's time. 2. They are rare now in proportion to the number who require their efforts, although in a less degree than formerly. III. THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF THIS UNCONCERN. 1. An inordinate and criminal self-love. 2. The prevalence of unbelief. 3. Despondency. (*E. Payson, D.D.*)

Failures.—In this and like passages we may trace signs of one of the apostle's trials, which we hardly estimate at its real measure. His forced inactivity opened to him a new experience. He had to sit still and see what became of his work, with the sense that the world thought him a defeated man. Judged by our rule such a result would appear to be failure in life; and we should expect the attendant feelings to be those of depression and disappointment. We know that it was not so with St. Paul; but moods of feeling come and go even in the strongest, and we may see signs that he was not unmoved. There is an undertone of deep sadness in this Epistle, full as it is of firm confidence and rejoicing. He was at Rome. What had become of his great Epistle? Do we not read between the lines here that the reality was not all he had hoped for? There was energy, zeal, progress; Christ and His servant were spoken of in the household of Nero: Rome was hearing more than ever of the name of Christ. But there was another side to this. How was the solemn adjuration of Rom. xii. 1 realized. What fruit had come from his lessons of forbearance and co-operation? What a tale does it tell when there in the midst of that great active Church, there was no man like-minded, &c. To a faith like St. Paul's these adverse appearances, though they might bring for him as they passed a cry of distress, wore a very different aspect to what they did to the world. They were but parts of his Master's use of him, and if the moment's disloyalty or littleness stung him, the next moment brought back the unfailing joy. I. THE FAILURE OF LIFE. The contrast between its opening and its close is what mankind has been accustomed to see from the beginning. Examples of it are familiar to us now. 1. In their coarser forms we have evidence of them in the old cries about the cheats and broken promises of life, in the discontent of the successful, and in the falls from goodness to evil. 2. All our lives have failure in them. Every action is an instance how we have come short. 3. We see the failures of life in the ordinary incidents of our experience; when the good die young; when the bright promise is cut short; when men miss their true calling or ignobly shrink from it; where a life of noble labour is wrecked as a ship sinks within sight of port. 4. But the failures which specially touch us are when a man has aimed high, and has shot wide of his mark or short of it; when care, love, and toil have been lavished on an idea or a cause, and the idea will not stand the test, or the cause dwindles into rivalry or strife; when the successful statesman sees his policy bringing forth fruit which he did not plant or look for; when the reformer sees his work taken out of his hand by disciples of meaner and narrower thoughts; still worse when he becomes their dupe and leaves the evils of the world greater than when he assailed them. 5. So it has been with those heroic institutions which have one after another tried some great effort for God's glory. The flock of Francis, the royal-hearted bridegroom of the forgotten poverty of Christ sank down too often into idle mendicants; the flock of Dominic became the ministers of the inquisition; the little company who devoted themselves to the service of Jesus swelled into that mighty order which has furnished the bravest of missionaries, but also the most daring and ambitious of political intriguers. 6. What right have we to wonder when the greatest of God's instruments, His Church, presents in its reality such a contrast to its ideal, when, in spite of all the wonders it has done, it has failed to do all that was expected of it. But what is it but the inevitable incident in the mingled greatness and littleness of human life. II. FAILURE MEANS HUMILIATION TO OURSELVES, BUT WE KNOW NOT WHAT IT MEANS IN THE COUNSELS OF GOD. There is something wiser even than the world, and that is the counsel of Him who taketh the wise in their own craftiness. Paul in prison could not refute the world's accusation of failure nor convince it of the meaning of what he had done, and of what was to follow it. His justification belonged to God his Master, and God kept it in His own hands for this world and the next. III. HOW SHALL WE THINK THEN ABOUT WHAT WE CALL FAILURE. 1. We cannot take it in at all adequately without being led to think, not hopelessly, scornfully, or indifferently, but humbly of this human life in which it is so severe a part of our discipline. And these lowly thoughts are enforced by the contrast between what we do as moral agents, and what we achieve within the range where simple intelligence works, in mathematics, physics, mechanics, &c. Within that range men can

predict without mistake, secure perfection in their skill, and move from one stupendous discovery to another; but all is changed when we pass into that other world whose ruling powers are love, duty, pain, and death. Compare what we achieve in mathematical and physical science with our success in the problems of government. Does not this read the Bible lesson of lowly thinking in the rebuke which it gives to ambition and pride. 2. Shall we then sit with folded hands, idle and hopeless because the chances of failure are so formidable, and like the servant in the parable bury our talent. There can be no failure worse than that. God our Master sends us forth not to make our mark but to work. God accomplishes His purposes in many ways; one of them we know, by the highest of all examples, the way that seems irretrievable disaster. The followers of the Cross have no right to look, in their own day, for the recognition of success; and, besides, we are bad judges of success and failure. Only in after years does the work draw itself up to its true grandeur; only then do we lose sight of partial failures and see it at last for what it is. 3. Don't let us be afraid, in a good cause, of the chances of failure. "Heaven is for those who have failed on earth," says the mocking proverb: and since Calvary no Christian need be ashamed to accept it. But even here, men have that within them which recognizes the heroic aspect of a noble failure. Even here it is better to have failed than not to have tried; to make the mistakes of the good than never to have struck one blow for Christ because so many have struck to little purpose. If the great and saintly life be incomplete, at least there is the great and saintly life. If the great effort has waxed feeble, at least there has been a new beacon of warning. The world would have missed its highest examples, if men had always waited till they could make a covenant with success. (*Dean Church.*)

The experience of isolation.—I. It is a common complaint amongst us that we want sympathy. 1. We are lonely, we say; and if not actually solitary, are solitary in heart. The young are too impatient, too imperious in their demand for sympathy; the old are sometimes too tolerant, at least too fond, of isolation. 2. There is much that is fanciful and morbid in the complaint of the young that they have no one likeminded. Why cannot that sister make one of her own household the sharer of her troubles and joys? No, that is too tame and commonplace a friendship: nothing but that which is self-made and self-sought has any charms for one who is as yet trying new sources of happiness instead of drinking thankfully of those which God has opened.

II. ST. PAUL GIVES NO ENCOURAGEMENT TO THIS UNGRATEFUL PURSUIT. 1. True, he was a man to whom life without love would have been a daily torture and death. Nor was his a promiscuous love only. Within the universal brotherhood he had his special preferences and close attachments. 2. But his thirst for human love was not the sentimental, purposeless thing it is with many. His best affections were engaged and fixed unalterably. "To me to live is Christ." What he sought in human friendship was not a supreme, nor even subordinate object of affection. He sought sympathy in his work for Christ: the loneliness he bewailed was a loneliness in his care for Christ's people. How this says to us, Away with your little, selfish, earth-born murmurings! So long as your troubles are all selfish they cannot be borne too loneliness. 3. And if sympathy like this be denied you, learn like Paul to be content (chap. iv. 11; Rom. viii. 31, &c.). (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Care for souls.—Some preachers think only of their sermon; others think only of themselves: the man who wins the soul is the man who aims at it. (*Dean Hook.*)

Natural care for others.—The following account of a piece of heroism on the part of a young Englishwoman, by which she lost her life, has just reached us from the Cape. On September 23 last, Miss Burton, a governess in the family of Mr. Saul Solomon, resident at Capetown, was out with her little pupils, when the youngest, a girl of five, fell into a reservoir of water. Miss Burton endeavoured vainly to rescue her little charge by means of her parasol, and then jumped in after her. The elder children ran home to raise the alarm, but when help was obtained both the governess and child had disappeared, and it was necessary to use drags for the bodies. Great sympathy was expressed throughout the town for the bereaved parents, and also much admiration for the brave girl who lost her life in attempting to save that of the child entrusted to her.

Ver. 21. For all seek their own.—*Self-seeking.*—I. ITS SIGNS. II. ITS CAUSES. III. ITS EVILS. IV. ITS CURE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The evil of self-seeking.*—I. THINGS OF A DIFFERENT SORT SPOKEN OF. 1. Their own things—the things of this life; so called—(1) Because they belonged to them by providential disposal and

civil right. (2) Some might call them so by a new covenant tenure so far as they used them to just and laudable purposes. (3) 'Twas well if others did not make them their own in a criminal sense, using them only for themselves, for self-indulgence. 2. The things of Jesus Christ: things of His kingdom. (1) The things of His glory, of which He is the object. (2) The things of our salvation, of which He is the author. II. A SINFUL DISPOSITION WITH REGARD TO THESE THINGS. "Seek" indicates the temper of the soul in contrivances and desires, and the actings of the life in its endeavours. 1. Some sought their own things, and not at all the things of Christ. 2. Others sought their own more than His. III. THE SUBJECT OF THIS DISPOSITION. "All" has special but not exclusive reference to ministers: for carnality in ministers usually spreads its contagion among the people; and the apostle afterwards speaks of both ministers and people as deeply infected with it when at the first summons of his second imprisonment they were so fearful of their secular interests that none dared publicly to own him (2 Tim. iv. 16). (*J. Guyse, D.D.*) *Seeking our own things*:—I. WHEN MAY WE BE SAID TO SEEK OUR OWN THINGS AND NOT THOSE OF CHRIST. 1. When we seek them in opposition or disservice to the things of Christ (John xi. 47-53; Acts xix. 27-29). (1) This spirit has acted under the Christian name; it still works in the Papal tyranny, and in those Protestants whose persecuting spirit substitutes a kingdom of this world in the room of Christ's. (2) Wherever this spirit prevails it eats out the power of godliness or suppresses it in others (Luke xxii. 24-26). 2. When we seek our own to the neglect of Christ's (Acts xviii. 17; Matt. xxii. 5; John v. 44). 3. When we seek our own more than Christ's (Matt. xiii. 20-22). Some seek them only in such ways and at such times as will cost them little expense or trouble. 4. When we seek our own so as to hinder our seeking Christ's. (1) We sometimes seek our own with such eagerness of spirit as puts us out of tune for spiritual things, and when we have been employed in spiritual work, a too hasty return to the world, and a too eager application to the things of it defaces promising impressions (Matt. xiii. 22). (2) At other times we are unreasonably employed in our own things where we ought to be engaged in the worship of God (Luke x. 40-42). 5. When there is too much of self secretly twisting itself into what we do for Christ (Zech. vii. 5-6; Philip. i. 15-16). (1) Some seek the things of Christ only for their own worldly interests, from secular views, to make a livelihood or to conciliate favour (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). (2) Others seek their own honour, and the gratification of their own pride, to recommend their learning, piety, or zeal (2 Kings x. 16; Matt. xxiii. 5-7). (3) The like sin we are guilty of when we are zealous for notions of our own, because they are our own and exalt our reason, or because they suit the general taste (Gal. i. 9-10; vi. 12-14). (4) When we set up our own righteousness instead of Christ's to recommend us to God's acceptance (Rom. ix. 30-32), or lean on our own strength and not on Christ's for spiritual performances (1 Cor. i. 29-31; Isa. xlv. 24-25). (5) Others seek an indulgence in their own passions and pleasures, seeking the things of Christ as a cloak for them, or as a salve to conscience. 6. When we put no respect to Christ on our own things (Col. iii. 23-24). (1) All our abilities should have a reference to Him that He may be glorified (1 Cor. vi. 20). (2) We should seek His love and favour that we may taste them with a sweeter relish as the purchase of His blood and branches of new covenant mercies. II. THE GREAT EVIL OF THIS. 1. Consider the excellence of Christ's things above all our own. (1) They have a substantial worth and real goodness in them as derived from His glorious Person (Heb. i. 3; 2 Cor. iii. 18). (2) There is all-comprehensive goodness to fill up our vastest capacities with complete satisfaction (Prov. viii. 20-21), and to ennoble them. (3) What are our own in comparison? They are empty, perishing, some debasing, will not profit in the day of wrath. (4) What folly then to prefer broken cisterns (Jer. ii. 13). 2. Consider how unsuitable this is to our character as Christians. (1) We are disciples of Christ, and profess to make of Him our all. (2) We are strangers and pilgrims, and profess to have our portion above. 3. Consider the abundant care and grace with which Christ has sought our things—our everlasting peace and salvation (2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 6-8, iv. 5; 2 Cor. v. 14-15; 1 John iv. 19). 4. Consider the danger of seeking our own in preference to Christ's. (1) The more distance there will be between Christ and us. (2) The more open we shall be to temptation. (3) The less fitness we shall have for heaven. (4) The more sure will be our rejection by God and the loss of the soul (Matt. xvi. 26). (*Ibid.*) *Giant "Self"*:—(Text in conjunction with 1 Cor. xiii. 5; Phil. ii. 4). I. A COMMON BUT SERIOUS FAULT. In one sense it is right to seek our own. To get

on with your learning, to prosper in your business, &c., is right and dutiful : but when you are wholly taken up with self, that is seeking your own in a bad sense. Selfishness appears in—1. Seeking our own pleasure and comfort to the neglect of that of others. You see it in taking the best seats, and trying to get the daintiest morsels at meal times ; in the endeavour to get the best of everything for ourselves, and to leave what is inferior for others ; in trying to secure a whole railway carriage to oneself, not caring how crowded the others may be. There is something of the kind in churches : and in families where children disregard each other or their parents, and grudging to others what we do not get ourselves. 2. Seeking our own honour and credit. What a danger there is of wishing ill to one's rival in school, play, or business, so that we may reap the advantage. Under this head may be included the tendency to allow others to fall under suspicion where we were the wrong-doers. 3. Seeking to overbear others with our opinion. Most of us like to get our own way and carry our point. Even when convinced many will not give in. 4. Seeking to gratify our own temper irrespective of the pain it may give others. In holding out sulkily, or saying cutting things. 5. Seeking our own salvation all unconcerned about the salvation of others. How unlike the sailor saved from the wreck, whose first word when he returned to consciousness was, "Another man overboard !" as if that were uppermost with him, so that there might be two salvations to him. II. A RARE BUT BEAUTIFUL GRACE. Love seeking not her own : beautiful, for it is being like Jesus ; it is an element of heaven, but rare. It is the opposite of what has been described. Jesus pleased not Himself ; nor did Abraham in his dispute with Lot. III. A VALUABLE COUNSEL. "Look not on his own things," &c. 1. In small matters. It is comparatively easy to be heroic on great occasions. 2. To the widest extent. (*J. H. Wilson, D.D.*) *The duty of unselfishness* :—If a vessel were on the eve of going down, what would you think if a few men were to get the boats launched, and before they were half filled, were to cut the ropes that bound them to the ship, and pull off? What would you think of such, congratulating themselves on their own escape, while leaving hundreds on board who were not aware of their danger, some of them, perhaps, sound asleep? I have heard of a man who had set fire to a mill, finding he had cut off his own retreat, and appearing at a window several stories up, appealing for help. The ladder was raised in the hope of saving him, but the danger was extreme, and neither fireman nor policeman would venture. A boy was seen forcing his way to the foot of the ladder, saying, "Let me go! I'm his son, and he is my father." And when the fireman would have pushed him back, the boy earnestly repeated, "He is my father, I tell thee, and he does not love God!" and the next minute saw him climbing aloft, making every effort to save his father, and perishing in the attempt. (*Ibid.*) *The beauty of unselfishness* :—A young woman was dying in a lodging in London, of a loathsome disease. Who was her attendant, tenderly nursing her day and night? You might have taken her for a sister. And yet the two had only been fellow-servants in the same house, and when the one fell ill and had to go into lodgings, the other gave up her situation to go to nurse her friend, spending her own strength and all her hard-earned savings in supporting her fellow-servant, and never leaving her till she died. A friend in Australia has sent me the following touching narrative :— "Some days since, a little girl, called Jane Buchanan, was carrying her brother, a child, in her arms, through the holes not far from Golden Point, on the White Flat, when the little fellow, from joyousness or some other cause, made a sudden spring from his sister's arms, and plumped into an abandoned shaft about ten feet deep. Without a moment's deliberation, our little heroine jumped in to save the life of her brother, and, what is equally gratifying, succeeded. A man who witnessed the accident hurried to the spot, found the girl up to her neck in water and holding the boy above her head, and was hailed with the girl's imploring entreaty—'Here, you save my little brother, and don't mind me.' Both were drawn up without delay, and both were uninjured save from the cold bath and wet clothes." (*Ibid.*) *Disinterested service* :—San Quala, the native apostle of Central Burmah, was, in consequence of his abilities and influences, offered a lucrative appointment by the British Commissioner at Pegu. Without hesitation he declined the offer, though having no salary, and depending for food and clothing on the people to whom he preached. He replied, "I cannot do it. I will not have the money. I will not mix up God's work with Government work. There are others to do this thing; employ them." And being further pressed with the suggestion that he might continue his work as missionary, which would thus be rendered easier, he said, "No, sir. When I eat with the children of poverty I am content. I did not leave my

dear wife and come up hither in search of silver or agreeable food. I came to this land that its poor benighted inhabitants might be saved." In two and a half years this man had gathered thirty churches and baptized more than two thousand adult believers with his own hands. (*J. B. J. Tintling, B.A.*) *Disinterestedness* :—In return for his splendid services to China, Gordon would accept only the distinctions of the "Yellow Jacket" and the "Peacock's Feather," which correspond to our own orders of the Garter and the Bath. Of these rewards he wrote to his mother: "I do not care twopence about these things, but know that you and father like them." The Chinese Government twice offered him a fortune. On the first occasion 10,000 taels were actually brought into his room, but he drove out the bearers of the treasure and would not even look at it. On the second occasion the sum was still larger, but this also he declined, and afterwards he wrote home:—"I do not want anything, either money or honours, from either the Chinese Government or our own. As for the honours, I do not value them at all. I know that I am doing a great deal of good, and, liking my profession, do not mind going on with my work. Do not think I am ill-tempered, but I do not care one jot about my promotion, or what people may say. I know I shall leave China as poor as I entered it, but with the knowledge that through my weak instrumentality upwards of eighty to one hundred thousand lives have been spared." *Selfishness common* :—When they (the Athenians, after a battle with Xerxes) came to the Isthmus, and every officer took a bullet from the altar to inscribe upon it the names of those who had done the best service, every one put himself in the first place, and Themistocles in the second. (*Plutarch.*) *Beauty of unselfishness* :—Mrs. Appleton, of Boston, the daughter of Daniel Webster, was dying, after a long illness. The great lawyer, after pleading an important cause in the court-room, on his way home stopped at the house of his daughter and went into her sick-room. She said to him, "Father, why are you out to-day in this cold weather without an overcoat?" The great lawyer went into the next room, and was in a flood of tears, saying, "Dying herself, yet thinking only of me." Oh! how much more beautiful is care for others than this everlasting taking care of ourselves! (*T. De Witt Talmage.*)

Ver. 22. But ye know the proof of him.—*Timothy* :—I. HIS FILIAL ATTACHMENT TO PAUL. II. HIS CO-OPERATION IN THE SERVICE OF THE GOSPEL. III. HIS TRIED AND FAITHFUL CHARACTER. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Proof of character* :—I. IS REQUIRED—1. In every station. 2. Particularly in a minister. II. IS GIVEN—1. By faithful service. 2. Willing and childlike submission to superiors. III. BRINGS HONOUR. 1. It commands observation. 2. Wins confidence. 3. Ensures success. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) As a son with the father.—A lesson—I. To YOUNGER MINISTERS to honour and reverence their ancients, and have them for an example. II. To YOUTHS to have proper regard to their elders (1 Tim. v. 1-2; Levit. xix. 32). III. To CHILDREN to obey their parents. IV. To SPIRITUAL CHILDREN in regard to those who have begotten them in the faith of Christ Jesus (Philemon 10; 1 Cor. iv. 15; Gal. iv. 19). (*H. Airay, D.D.*)

Vers. 23-24. Him, therefore, I hope to send.—*The servant of God in affliction* :—I. CARES FOR THE CHURCH. II. WAITS PATIENTLY THE END. III. COMMITS THE FUTURE INTO THE HANDS OF THE LORD. IV. ANTICIPATES DELIVERANCE IN HOPE OF FURTHER SERVICE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) So soon as I shall see how it will go with me.—*New year's sermon* :—The first day of the new year is often a season of—1. Peculiar transactions: balancing of accounts and commencing business. 2. Humanity and benevolence, family gatherings, gifts to the poor. 3. Thankfulness and joy for preservation of life, &c. 4. Seriousness and recollection. 5. Fore cast. Let us confine ourselves to the latter view, and consider—I. OUR INABILITY TO DETERMINE OUR FUTURE CIRCUMSTANCES. The endowments of the apostles were not absolute. In some cases Paul could foretell things to come, but in others he was left in ignorance, and could only reason from probabilities (Acts xx. 22). And when we look into futurity, all that meets the eye is a dark unknown. 1. Even prophecy is wrapped up in so much obscurity that the fulfilment and the explanation generally arrive together. How often has this been exemplified in the calculations of not very wise men, who, in addition to being drawn off from more useful duties, have frequently survived their laborious schemes. 2. Your own history testifies that God has led you by a way which you knew not, and you hardly know it now. Had all your changes been foretold, they would have appeared incredible? 3. Nor have you any information that can enable you to foresee things for a single

year—how it will go with your health, circumstances, relations. II. WHAT USE WE SHOULD MAKE OF THIS IGNORANCE. Let us—1. Learn our littleness, and that God is all in all. "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart." 2. Beware of presumption. The future is God's, not thine. Never say "I will" without "If the Lord will." 3. Never despair. Seeing we know not how it will go with us, why should we look only for evil? 4. Draw off our attention from future events to present duties. We are to cast, not our work, but our care, upon the Lord. Duty and means belong to us, but events are entirely His. 5. Seek after a preparation for all events. We shall find this in Divine grace. This drew prayer from Jacob when he went forth with a staff; this preserved Daniel in the court of Darius and in the lion's den; this enabled Paul to say, "I can do all things," &c. And seeing that we have neither the ordering of the weather, nor the choice of food, happy is the man whose constitution enables him to bear any weather, and whose appetite enables him to relish any food. III. WHAT THERE IS TO ENCOURAGE US UNDER ALL THIS DARKNESS AND UNCERTAINTY. You say, "I see not how it will go with me," and—1. It is well you do not. You know as much as is good for you. It is with the mind as with the senses. A greater degree of hearing would incommode us. If our eyes could see things microscopically we should be afraid to move. Were we informed of the blessings of providence beforehand, we should cease to enjoy those we have; or of adversities, what dismay would ensue. 2. God does; and He is your friend, and far more concerned for your happiness than you can be. 3. You know that it shall be well with them that fear God. 4. Your ignorance only regards time; all in eternity is sure. (*W. Jay.*) *The Providence of God:*—We should—I. EXPRESS FUTURE PURPOSES WITH A RESIGNATION TO GOD'S WILL AND GUIDANCE (Psa. xxi. 1). II. OBSERVE THAT GOD'S PROVIDENCE extends to every particular thing—our incomings, outgoings, journeys, the very hairs of our head. This should teach us—1. To set on our affairs with looking up to heaven for permission (James iv. 13). Let us in all our affairs be holy, and not limit our holiness to coming to church. 2. That we ought not to set on anything wherein we cannot expect God's guidance, and so consequently cannot trust in Him for a blessing. 2. To take nothing but that for which we can give God thanks. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Trust in the Lord:*—I. IMPLIES—1. Reliance on His providential care. 2. Because of His mercy and love. II. IS NECESSARY UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. In joy and sorrow. 2. In all our plans and purposes. 3. In small matters as in great. III. IS A SOURCE OF UNSPEAKABLE COMFORT. 1. It brings peace. 2. It assures that all will be well. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Trust in God:*—The child at school is not to lean his elbow on the table, and vex himself by thinking how he shall find raiment, how he shall get home, how the expense of his education is to be defrayed. He is a learner; he is to mind his book—the father requires no more of him—he will provide. The farmer is not to muse from day to day about the weather: "Perhaps it may not be a fine season—there may be a blight—and all my labour may be lost." No: but he is to act; he goes forth bearing precious seed, commits it to the ground, and then pursues his other business—and what can his anxiety do afterwards? The soldier is to learn his exercise, to obey the word of command, to keep his arms bright, to be always at the post assigned him; but he is not to neglect all this, by busying himself in drawing plans of the campaign, and describing the duties of the general. (*W. Jay.*)

Ver. 25-30. I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus.—*Epaphroditus:*—I. HIS TITLES. 1. The first of these shows his religion, and his holy union with the apostle and other believers. For the Christians in those early ages called each other "brother," a name full of sweetness and friendliness derived from the custom of the Jewish Church, and suitable, inasmuch as they all have one Father, and are all begotten by one Spirit, uniting them in one family. They are nourished by the same food, consecrated by the same sacraments, and called to the same inheritance. Every time you see a Christian, whatever his condition, he is your brother. Paul did not disdain to acknowledge Epaphroditus. 2. "Companion in labour" relates to office, viz., the ministry; and how excellent the office which renders men companions of Paul and the apostles. 3. "Fellow soldier" expresses the part he had taken in his battles against the devil, the world, false brethren, &c., for the glory of his Master and the salvation of the flock. This title is peculiarly suitable to believers in Jesus Christ, who are called to suffer persecution, carry the cross, and "wrestle not with flesh and blood," &c. (2 Tim. ii. 3-6). 4. "Your messenger," in relation to his special mission to the apostle. 5.

"My minister," in reference to the service rendered St. Paul: not the least of the glories of Epaphroditus. II. HIS SICKNESS. How strange it seems that so good and useful a man should be disabled, and that Paul, who could cure diseases, could not cure his! Learn, however—1. That the Lord wishes that His servants should be subject to these afflictions and infirmities lest the excellence of their piety and graces should raise their vanity. Thus they are kept modest (2 Cor. xii. 6). 2. That the wonders of His power may shine gloriously when, with such weak instruments, He does not fail to perform His work (2 Cor. iv. 7; xii. 9; 2 Pet. i. 7; 2 Thess. v. 6-7). III. HIS CURE. 1. God often allows His own to descend to the last degree of sorrow to relieve them afterwards from it with greater *eclat*: as we see in the cases of Hezekiah and David. This proceeding is very suitable. (1) For that our faith may be better exercised, the extremity of our danger firing our zeal and warming our desires in vows and prayers. (2) For God; the greater our danger the more glorious His power. 2. This was not merely an exercise of God's power, but of (1) His mercy towards Epaphroditus. (2) His goodness towards Paul. Christianity does not dehumanize us. Paul's sorrow was deep because natural. IV. HIS RETURN. This good servant of God, knowing that the news of his malady had much grieved his friends, touched with reciprocal love, desired, as soon as he was in health, to see them again that he might change their sorrow into joy. Which shall we most admire, the affection of the flock towards the shepherd or that of the shepherd towards the flock. It is one of the miracles of love which unites and blends what distance in vain separates. V. HIS RECOMMENDATION (ver. 29). For the love of the Lord as His faithful servant whom He has given you, receive him. This is what Christ calls receiving one in His name (Mark ix. 37). Learn—1. Not to judge of men by the accidents which befall them. Innocence is not always prosperous, and piety often falls into great calamities. 2. That it is one thing to meet with affliction in the work of the Lord, and another to meet with it as an effect of our vice, avarice, or vanity. 3. That the closest and tenderest relations should subsist between pastor and flock. 4. That personal considerations should yield to the advantage of the Church. (*J. Daille*). *Epaphroditus*:—I. HIS CHRISTIAN STATUS—a brother, &c. II. HIS SICKNESS. 1. Incurred in the service of Christ. 2. A source of solicitude to the apostle and the Church. III. HIS RECOVERY through Divine mercy. IV. HIS RETURN to Philippi. 1. Welcome. 2. Honourable. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The titles of Epaphroditus*:—I. BROTHER. A name significant—1. Of office. As judges call one another brother, so does Paul Epaphroditus, because they discharged the same spiritual functions. 2. Of love and friendship. It shows the care which one Christian man should have of another. 3. Of equality. Hereby St. Paul shows—(1) His humility, who, being an apostle, called one of inferior rank brother. (2) His magnanimity. II. FELLOW LABOURER. Unless ministers are this they are fellow loiterers. This must not be, because the Scriptures compares their office with the most laborious of occupations. If ministers are fellow-labourers, then—1. Their people must submit to be wrought upon. If they are builders you must be lively stones, and suffer yourselves to be squared and made fit for the building. If they are husbandmen you must be the ground, and such as may bring forth fruit to perfection, else all their labour upon you will be vain. 2. God suffers them not to be alone (Mark vi. 7) so that they may render mutual aid. Thus He sent Jerome and Augustine, the one severe and powerful, the other meek and gentle; Luther hot and fiery, and Melancthon soft and mild, each to temper the other. III. FELLOW-SOLDIER. 1. Every man's life is a warfare. 2. In this warfare ministers are captains, who fight against the enemies within us, and lead us against the enemies without us. Then—(1) Hold not forth against the ministry. (2) Help it (Judges v. 23). (3) Look for recompense in the triumphant kingdom. IV. MESSENGER OF THE CHURCHES AND MINISTER TO PAUL'S WANTS. 1. The child of God is subject to wants. 2. They shall be satisfied. Rather than Elias shall perish for hunger the ravens shall feed him (1 Kings xvii. 4). If Dives will not have mercy on Lazarus, dogs shall. For Paul God provides an Epaphroditus or an Onesiphorus. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *The relations of believers*:—I. THEIR FELLOWSHIP. 1. Brethren. 2. Companions in toil and conflict. II. THEIR CONSEQUENT SYMPATHY WITH EACH OTHER. 1. They respect each other's wishes. 2. Help each other's joys. 3. Minister to each other's wants. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Epaphroditus* is known to us only from the notices in this Epistle. He is, doubtless, to be distinguished from Epaphras (Col. i. 7; iv. 12; Philemon 23); for though the names are the same the identity seems improbable. 1. The one

appears to have been a native of Philippi (ver. 25); the other of Colossæ (Col. iv. 12). The longer form is always used of the Philippian delegate; the shorter, of the Colossian teacher. The name, in fact, is so extremely common in both forms that the coincidence affords no presumption of the identity of persons. The name is not specially characteristic of Macedonia, but occurs abundantly everywhere. On a Thessalonian inscription we meet with one Gaius Clodius Epaphroditus. This concurrence of names is suggestive. The combination which occurs once might well occur again; and it is possible, though in the absence of evidence hardly probable, that Gaius the Macedonia (Acts xix. 29) is the same as Epaphroditus the Philippian. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) *The attachment of fellow-soldiers:*—An American officer who had fought in the late wars was seated in his pleasant parlour, musing on the turbulent scenes through which he had passed. Suddenly the door-bell rang. The officer rose to open, the new-comer, and a lame and weather-beaten soldier stood before him. "Will you buy my books, sir?" he said. "I do not wish them," was the quick reply, and the door was closed. The officer resumed his seat, but strange questionings arose in his mind. Was not that the face of one he knew? Had he not heard that voice before? Impressed as with the fear of some ill act, he quickly advanced to the door, and on opening it again, there stood the brave hero of many battles with the big tears starting from his eyes. He spoke again—"Don't you know me, colonel?" The voice had a well-remembered sound. And this time it fell not on dead ears nor a stony heart. The maimed soldier was recognized as one who had fought on many a field of daring and carnage by the officer's side, and who was covered all over with glorious scars, the tokens of his patriotism and bravery. Instantly the door was flung wide open, and the veteran was welcomed into the mansion of the opulent officer, who, with tears in his eyes, fell on the hero's neck and embraced him. The scene that followed the recognition was one never to be forgotten, and the colonel afterwards, relating the incident of the meeting, said he felt at that greeting a veneration for his old comrade almost amounting to a feeling of worship.

Vers. 26-28. For He longed after you all.—*The sickness of Epaphroditus:*—**I. THE SICKNESS AND ITS LESSONS.** 1. God's children are subject to sickness as long as they live. (1) This arises from the nature of the body and the character of its surroundings. (2) Thus grace is strengthened in the soul (2 Cor. iv. 16). 2. God suffers His children to come to extremities, yea, even to death itself, as Hezekiah, Job, Jonah, David, Daniel, the three children, the disciples, our Lord Himself, and by this means it comes to pass that when all ordinary means fail their trust is not placed on the means but on God's own good will and power. 3. God suffers us to fall into extremities that He might try what is in us, and that He might exercise our graces. **II. HIS FEELING.** "Full of heaviness," not for himself but for them. "He longed after you all." A great triumph of grace when we can refrain from murmuring about ourselves, and feel only for the effect of our affliction on others. **III. GOD'S INTERPOSITION.** 1. Had mercy on him. (1) God's mercy is the spring of all God's dealings with us. (2) Let us look to it that we wilfully neglect not or cast not away mercy, nor rest in our own merit. 2. Had mercy on me. **IV. PAUL'S CONDUCT.** 1. Although he regarded the restoration of his friend as a special mercy to himself, he was more anxious about the comfort of the Philippians than for his own. 2. This self-denial, however, augmented the apostle's joy, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (*R. Sibbet, D.D.*) *Sickness affords room for the display of—***I. BROTHERLY SYMPATHY.** **II. DIVINE MERCY.** (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The sickness of Epaphroditus:*—**I. HE WAS SICK.** 1. It is a salutary thing for the healthy to remember the sick. What a change does even a slight sickness make in our thoughts and feelings! What an importance does it give to things at other times trivial, and what an insignificance to things at other times engrossing! The strong man is then in the grasp of a stronger. The worldly man finds then that there is something unseen as true as things that are seen; the busy man is reminded that there will be an end of work, and the frivolous that there will be an end of pleasure. 2. What a natural incongruity there is between health and sickness! How does the very presence of a person in robust health jar upon the sensitiveness of a frame diseased? How few there are whose visit to a chamber of sickness carries with it repose and soothing! What a tenderness should we cherish towards the peculiarities, frailties, irritabilities of sickness. What care there should be in the choice of times, the control of speech, the selection of topics, and in the regard to brevity!

And yet in all these things, how should art conceal art? and a delicate consideration prompt everything. 3. God gives these gifts naturally to some: and some learn it in the school of Jesus. II. **NIGH UNTO DEATH.** 1. Happy are they who well use those seasons of passing indisposition, which interrupt from time to time a life of average vigour. They will find themselves the less surprised and overwhelmed by the arrival of that time when a mortal sickness shall darken the windows for ever. 2. This sort of visit to the gates of the grave, and acquaintance with the preliminaries of dying, is an occurrence by no means infrequent. We are all familiar with records of perils by water, in which every stage of the process of dying has been travelled through. How remarkable are the details of those records. Words and acts long forgotten flash again upon the mind, and they have made the person able to tell from experience how it may be in the judgment, how conscience may arraign the sinner at the bar of God, and do the office of the undying worm and the unquenchable fire. 3. But sickness, too, as well as accident, may give something of the same experience. There may have been a long suspense between life and death. The physician may have destroyed hope. At last a turn has come; the sickness was close upon death, but it was not death, and all this mortal strife must be endured again. Has that person nothing to tell of those days of expected dissolution? Can he lose again the experience then acquired. We know that no such experience can, of itself, convert a soul (Luke xvi. 31); but it will, at least, tell how small and poor the world looked, how true God's truth appeared; and well may such be asked whether they have duly cherished the impression made upon them in those days of suspense. III. **GOD HAD MERCY ON HIM.** Is this the same apostle who wrote Phil. i. 23? Does he account it a mercy which withdraws a man from immediate fruition? We may draw from this an illustration of the naturalness of the Word of God. However bright the light the gospel throws upon the world beyond still life is a blessing (Eccles. xi. 7), and still death is an enemy. To speak of a recovery from sickness as a misfortune is as contradictory to the language of the Bible as it is to the voice of nature within. 1. No one will doubt this in the case of one whose salvation is less than secure. That such a man is not cut off in his sins, that a new opportunity is given him for amendment, is indeed a mercy. 2. But Epaphroditus was a Christian man. To him death would have been gain, and had providence so ordered it Paul would have bidden his Philippian friends to give thanks over him as one who slept in Jesus. If God wills thus it is well for the Christian; if God wills the opposite it is well still. If he lives He can still work and gather in more souls for Christ. (*Dean Vaughan.*) **Recovery from sickness:—I. THE SICKNESS WHICH YOU HAVE ENDURED.** 1. You have, perhaps, been suddenly smitten after a long and uninterrupted course of health. 2. Or your sickness has been preceded by protracted feebleness and delicacy. 3. But whichever way it has come the affliction has secluded you, discontinued your active pursuits, oppressed you with pain, and, it may be, destroyed all hope for the time of recovery. 4. How solemn and affecting was your condition when the crisis arrived. Death, "the king of terrors," had knocked and was standing in your presence. 5. What were your thoughts as you thus trembled on the brink of eternity? Did you see heaven, or was there nothing before you but "a fearful looking for of judgment." II. **THE RECOVERY WHICH THE GOD OF MERCY PERMITTED YOU TO ENJOY.** 1. The source of this mercy is Divine. No doubt all the means which skill and kindness could suggest had been employed in the case of Epaphroditus, but when his recovery was effected the apostle ascribed it entirely to the hand of God. And so must you. He gave the skill which selected the suitable means and gave His blessing so that the means were rendered effectual. Have you thanked Him for His mercy. 2. Your recovery manifests the power of Divine mercy. Next to resurrection, recovery is the most astonishing and merciful display of Divine power. 3. Your recovery manifests the sovereignty of this mercy. Others have died. Had you died none could have charged God with injustice or unkindness. He was under no obligation to heal you. 4. The value and importance of this mercy. A state of sickness, however painful to the flesh, has often proved exceedingly profitable to the spirit, and recovery has given you a fresh opportunity for salvation and usefulness. Some are hardened by the dispensation, but in your case it is to be hoped it has been sanctified and blessed. III. **THE MERCY WHICH YOUR RECOVERY HAS CONFERRED ON OTHERS AS WELL AS ON YOURSELVES.** There are no earthly sorrows more deep or distressing than those which death occasions to the survivors. In the case of Christians the sorrow is alleviated by hope, but in the case of unbelievers it is burdened by despair. Whatever may have

been your case, every child, brother, sister, relative, friend, has echoed on your recovery the joyful exclamation, "and on me also." In restoring your friend God has mercifully—1. Answered your prayers. 2. Regarded your afflictions. (1) Your poverty. (2) Your own sickness. (3) Your sorrow in anticipating other troubles. (4) Your grief lest your friend should die in impenitence. 3. Regarded your souls by sparing a fellow labourer. (*J. Alexander, D.D.*) *Sympathy*:—The apostle—I. SHARES IN THE SORROW OF THE PHILIPPIANS. II. HASTES TO WIFE AWAY THEIR TEARS. III. REJOICES IN THEIR JOY. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Why God's servants are afflicted*:—As the skill of a pilot is more clearly seen in the guidance of a bad vessel among banks and breakers, than if he piloted some good ship, well equipped in a safe sea without danger; so is it evident that the power and wisdom of God are more clearly and wonderfully shown, when He preserves and guides to the completion of His plans His poor believers, weak and subject as they are to the sufferings and miseries of other men, than if, stripping them of their vileness, and clothing them from thence with an immortal nature, incapable of suffering, He employed them thus fitted in His work. Besides, He acts thus for the praise of believers themselves, afflictions justifying their piety, and making its lustre appear as well as its firmness in the eyes of men and angels. It remains subject to calumny whilst in prosperity. Satan desires to make it pass for hypocrisy, and for a mercenary service, as if they only loved God because He spared them. It is what he formerly said of Job, that he only feared the Lord because He had everywhere encompassed him with a hedge of providence and blessing, and that he would doubtless change his piety into blasphemy if God were to strike him. To confound this malace, the Lord gave up to him the property and health of His servant, and caused his faith and his love to be seen by his constancy in the midst of these severe trials. Sickness, poverty, persecution, and other sufferings, are as it were the crucible of God. He makes believers pass through this fire, that their piety being preserved, and that coming out of it more pure and brilliant, every one may be forced to acknowledge their value; and this is what we are taught by the apostle St. Peter, saying that the trial of our faith in the midst of temptations is much more precious than gold which perishes, and though it be tried with fire shall turn "to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (*J. Daillé.*) *Providential care*:—All the events of life are precious to one that has this simple connection with Christ of faith and love. No wind can blow wrong, no event be mistimed, no result disastrous. If God but cares for our inward and eternal life, if by all the experiences of this life, He is reducing it and preparing for its disclosure, nothing can befall us but prosperity. Every sorrow shall be but the setting of some luminous jewel of joy. Our very mourning shall be but the enamel around the diamond; our very hardships but the metallic rim that holds the opal, glancing with strange interior fires. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Timely providences*:—We find a multitude of Providences so timed to a minute, that, had they fallen out ever so little sooner or later, they had signified but little in comparison of what they now do. Certainly, it cannot be casualty, but counsel, that so exactly nicks the opportunity. Contingencies keep no rules. How remarkable was the relief of Rochelle, by a shoal of fish that came into the harbour when they were ready to perish with hunger, such as they never observed either before or after that time. Mr. Dodd could not go to bed one night, but feels a strong impulse to visit (though unseasonably) a neighbouring gentleman, and just as he came he meets him at his door, with a halter in his pocket, just going to hang himself. Dr. Tate and his wife, in the Irish rebellion, flying through the woods with a sucking child, which was just ready to expire, the mother, going to rest it upon a rock, puts her hand upon a bottle of warm milk, by which it was preserved. A good woman, from whose mouth I received it, being driven to a great extremity, all supplies failing, was exceedingly plunged into unbelieving doubts and fears, not seeing whence supplies should come; when lo! in the nick of time, turning some things in a chest, she unexpectedly lights upon a piece of gold, which supplied her present wants, till God opened another door of supply. If these things fall out casually, how is it that they observe the very juncture of time so exactly? This is become proverbial in Scripture. "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" (Gen. xxii. 14). (*J. Flavel.*) Receive Him therefore in the Lord with all gladness.—*The succour of the saints is*—I. A WORK OF CHRIST. 1. Enjoined. 2. Exemplified. 3. Commended by Him. II. A WORK OF SACRIFICE. Requiring—1. The renunciation of ease and comfort. 2. Often of health and life. III. A WORK OF HONOUR. 1. Those who undertake it are justly esteemed. 2. Their preservation is a source of joy to the

Church. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Christian's duty* :—I. To DO ALL THINGS "IN THE LORD." 1. Marry. 2. Love. 3. Salute. 4. Receive ministers. 5. Live. 6. Die. II. THE REASON FOR THIS. A Christian in all looks to the Lord, and depends upon Him. Carnal men do contrarily. They marry, love, &c., carnally. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *The Christian's duty to his ministers* :—I. THE DUTY. 1. To receive them joyfully—whatever their ministrations may be, rebuke or encouragement, admonition or comfort. It is for your good; rebel not against them. 2. To hold such in reputation, personally and officially. (1) By speaking well of them and not suffering detraction. (2) By co-operating with them. (3) By supporting them. II. THE MOTIVES. 1. It is an evidence that we are the children of God, and have passed from death to life, if we love and reverence the brethren. 2. Those whom God esteems we ought to make the most account of. 3. Consider their gifts and graces. 4. Remember the good you reap by them. (*Ibid.*) *The work of Christ* :—I. IS ESSENTIALLY BENEVOLENT IN ITS OBJECTS. 1. To feed the hungry. 2. Clothe the naked. 3. Visit the sick and the prisoner. II. DESERVES EVERY SACRIFICE. 1. Of time. 2. Money. 3. Life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Returning labourers to be welcomed with joy* :—You remember the enthusiastic welcome which was accorded among us to the brave young American, Stanley, who had encountered innumerable perils to carry aid to the illustrious missionary pioneer of Central Africa, David Livingstone. We felt as if in helping the noble old man, whom all of us had come to think of as a personal friend, he had helped ourselves. We know what pleasure and sense of honour would be felt if Florence Nightingale presented herself under our roof, or under the roof of any true-hearted countryman of those wounded soldiers of the Crimea, for whom she cared so wisely and lovingly, and who kissed her very shadow on the wall, as she passed through the wards of the hospital. Somewhat like this would be the position of Epaphroditus on his return to Philippi. The knowledge of his heroism and self-devotion in the cause of the Saviour they loved, and this in discharging the duties of a ministry for the relief and comfort of their dear friend and spiritual father the apostle, could not but lead them to feel it a peculiar privilege and honour to be permitted to welcome him once more among them. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) *The risk of Christian work* :—The word "not regarding" means Epaphroditus had risked his life as the gambler does his stake. He had played with it as in a game of chance. The same word in later days, and possibly with a direct reference to this passage, has given a name to an inferior, and though sometimes a disorderly, yet a self-forgetful class of church-officers, who from Constantine's time onwards were set apart as attendants on the sick and dying. They were men who hazarded their lives in times of plague and contagious sickness, like the *παράβολοι*, or *bestiarii*, who exposed themselves to the risk of death in conflict with the wild beasts of the amphitheatre. It was in some such way as this that Epaphroditus staked his life in faithfully representing the Philippian Church in carrying out the mission with which he had been entrusted. (*J. Hutchinson, D.D.*) *Life preferred to service* :—In the early part of the American campaign some of the officers displayed great lack of bravery. This fact soon became known amongst the men, and caused great contempt. Once in an engagement a soldier said to his comrade, "Why don't you get behind a tree?" The reply came instantly, "Oh! there's not enough of them for the officers." (*H. O. Mackay.*) *Life not regarded* :—Father Peto and Elstowe, two men who had dared to speak out bravely as to Henry the Eighth's misdeeds, were summoned before the king's council to receive a reprimand. Lord Essex told them they deserved to be sewn into a sack and thrown into the Thames. "Threaten such things to rich and dainty folk, who have their hope in this world," answered Elstowe, gallantly, "we fear them not; with thanks to God, we know the way to heaven to be as ready by water as by land." Men of such metal might be broken, but they could not be bent. The two offenders were hopelessly unrepentant and impracticable, and it was found necessary to banish them. (*Ibid.*)

CHAPTER III.

VERS. 1-11. Finally, my brethren.—*Prideless pride*:—1. What were the things not irksome and safe? (1) Counsels in some lost Epistles. (2) Messages delivered by word of mouth through his delegates. (3) Earlier verbal communications. (4) Something in the Epistle. The latter probably referring—(a) to the main topic of the letter—rejoicing, or making their boast in Christ; or (b) to their dissensions, a reference in the making of which he was interrupted. Each supplies a good sense. In the first case he proposes to dwell once more on that which will be the sure antidote to false pride, in the other he will add some further counsels respecting their dissensions. 2. Since the apostle seems to be about to conclude, what occasioned the interruption? Probably some outbreak of Jewish proselytism respecting which he warns the Philippians in plain language. At the word “circumcision” he enters on a fresh line of thought which occupies the rest of the chapter.

I. HE AFFIRMS THAT HE AND HIS GENTILE BRETHREN HAVE THE MOST VALID CLAIM TO WHAT THE JEWS SO DEARLY PRIZED. “We are the circumcision.” He justifies his assertion by describing—1. The nature of their worship. The one essential thing in worship is its spirit. The kind of worship the proselytizers offered rested largely on forms. If the form were only according to their pattern it was enough. The apostle, on the contrary, takes his stand on the requirement of our Lord: “God is a spirit,” &c. Heart, not hand, lip, knee worship was the main thing, and in this respect they and he were more in harmony with the purpose of circumcision than those who submitted to the rite. 2. The ground of their trust. They rested in position rather than privilege. Circumcision was the sum of Jewish privilege. It was the main thing about which the Jews boasted. But their high privilege had not led them to a high morality, but had been made a cloak for sin. In contrast with this Paul puts Christian conduct. Christians rejoiced, or made their boast, in Christ Jesus, and had no confidence in the flesh. They looked to Him as the fulfiller of all righteousness for us and the example of all righteousness in us. Theirs was a prideless pride. II. HE ARGUES WITH THE JEW ON HIS OWN GROUND. The ground of their boasting might well be his as regards—1. Inherited privileges. (1) The Jews make much of circumcision and the time of its performance. If before the eighth day it is nothing; if after, of less value. That, then, which the strictest Jews demand is true of me. (2) They also talk of the old stock. I belong to it. (3) They pride themselves on their tribe. What will compare with mine? (4) Nay, more; scattered among the Gentiles, exposed to taint, to loss of language and custom, yet my ancestors remained pure in every sense. I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews. 2. Personal acts. (1) What of the law? I belonged by choice to the separated sect. (2) What of zeal? These men are making much of that; but did not I persecute the Church? (3) And as for righteousness, when was I a defaulter? 3. Here surely was ground for boasting had he been so disposed. But—III. THE WHOLE OF THESE MOST COVETED THINGS HE NOW COUNTS LOSS. He relinquished them all to win Christ. He changes the figure. He had been speaking of gain and loss; he now speaks of entering on a race. 1. He divests himself of all self-righteous robes. He felt himself disqualified for the contest in any such dress. 2. He desires to lay firmest hold of Christ. 3. He seeks to feel the full meaning of the resurrection power, the propulsion to a higher and nobler purpose. 4. He asks to share the sufferings of Christ. Note this, inasmuch as many talk as though the sufferings of Christ had dispensed with their own. 5. He would be fashioned to the likeness of His death. 6. And so he would reach the goal—resurrection, *i.e.*, complete newness of life through Christ Jesus. Conclusion: This delineation has its practical bearing on ourselves. 1. It puts privileges in their true place. They increase our obligation to serve God. 2. External religiousness is put in its right place. 3. We are shown where we shall only find the true safeguard against modern delusions on religious questions—in Christ. (*J. J. Goadby.*) Rejoice in the Lord.—*Grounds of Christian rejoicing*:—He who would rejoice in the Lord must—I. BEWARE OF ERROR (vers. 1-3). II. RENOUNCE ALL AND TRUST IN CHRIST ONLY (vers. 4-8). III. EMBRACE THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST (vers. 9-11). (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) I. REJOICE IN THE LORD is the text of the whole chapter. After a long chapter on the suppression of self and the absorption of every faculty in the service of Christ, here seems to be the reward. Observe—1. It is “in the Lord.” There are two estates of men, “in the flesh,” and “in the Lord.” To be in the latter estate is to possess all that can minister to happiness. So we are here reminded that we can command our

own happiness. It is enforced as a duty. Joy is a feeling that ranges over all life and time. It remembers from what it has been rescued; it rejoices in present security; it hopes for more than it can conceive in the future. 2. But if the Christian is seduced from Christ the joy departs, and gives place to a deeper desolation than the soul has ever known. It was this danger that the apostle dreaded, arising from two errors; one doctrinal, which would teach them to cease to trust in Christ alone; another practical, which would make them selfish and carnal, and so enemies of the Cross. II. CHRISTIAN REJOICING DEFENDED AGAINST ITS JUDAIZING ENEMIES. The apostle bids the Philippians beware of the dogs, evil-workers, concision, suggestive phrases, the last implying that circumcision having served its purpose had become dishonoured as well as disused; the word was now but a synonym of a Christian profession (Col. ii. 11; Rom. ii. 29). Those were the true circumcision who—1. Worship God in the spirit, *i.e.*, they offer a worship which is ordered, prompted, released from ceremony and made acceptable by the Spirit of God. (1) The Holy Ghost is the Master of all Christian worship. (2) The object of that worship or service is included in the term and not expressed (Rom. ix. 4; Acts xxvi. 7; Rom. xii. 1). (3) The worship presented is “in spirit and in truth,” because the communism of man’s spirit with God through the indwelling spirit (Rom. viii. 26; Jude 20) is His own temple. But this must be external also. The word “circumcision” indicates the fellowship of those who, by this symbolic rite, were dedicated to God. And Christian public worship is the common spiritual homage of men who are serving God in their spirits while they are serving Him in His house. (4) But the Spirit unites no human spirit to God which is not holy; and so the cutting off of sin was what circumcision always signified (Rom. ii. 29). 2. Rejoice in Christ Jesus, *i.e.*, confide or glory. They have learned that circumcision has given place to baptism; but they put trust in neither. They trust only in Christ, and as they trust they glory. 3. Have no confidence in the flesh. (1) In the fleshly ordinance which cannot be retained without dishonouring Christ. (2) In the “fleshly,” *i.e.*, personal and national prerogatives of the circumcised members of the old covenant. They renounced Judaism with all its advantages. (3) In anything that human nature can do to win the Divine favour. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *It is God’s will that we should rejoice in Him.*—I. WHAT IS IT TO REJOICE? Delight is the soul’s acquiescence, or resting itself, in what it apprehends to be good. There is a two-fold delight. 1. Bodily or sensitive called pleasure, which proceeds from some impression made by a suitable object upon the senses. Of which note—(1) This in itself is not sinful, because both the sense and the object and the suitableness of them were all made by God. (2) Hence it is permitted by God (Eccles. iii. 22; v. 19). (3) But corrupt man is too apt to sin in these sensitive pleasures, either—(a) in the unlawful object (Psa. lxxii. 4), (b) or in the manner by excessiveness (Jude 12). 2. Rational or spiritual joy, seated in the soul itself. II. WHAT IS IT TO REJOICE IN THE LORD. 1. God was pleased at first to order the soul of man so that it had a natural tendency and suitableness to the nature of God. 2. But the soul being disordered by sin is apt to rejoice in nothing but externals. 3. It is therefore God’s will that we labour after our primitive perfections and joys, so as to delight ourselves—(1) In Him as God and our God (Psa. xxviii. 7; Deut. xii. 12, 18). (2) In His—(a) works (Psa. civ. 31); (b) Word (Psa. i. 2, cxix. 103); (c) properties; goodness (Luke xviii. 19); mercy; justice; power (Psa. lxxiii. 5-7); wisdom; truth; omnipresence. III. HOW DOETH IT APPEAR THAT WE OUGHT AND MAY THUS REJOICE? 1. From Scripture. (1) God commands it (Psa. xxxii. 11; Phil. iv. 4). (2) Christ prays for it (John xvii. 13). (3) This is one great end of His promises (Rom. xv. 4). (4) It is one great end of the ministry (Isa. lii. 7; Rom. x. 15; 2 Cor. i. 24). (5) It is the end of Christ’s sending the Spirit (John xvi. 7). The Spirit comforts us by—(a) Renewing us. (b) Convincing us it is our duty (John xvi. 9). (c) Witnessing our adoption (Gal. iv. 6). (d) Blessing His ordinances to us. (e) Bringing and directing us to Christ for it (John xiv. 26). (f) Weaning us from fleshly delights. (g) Powerfully working comfort in us (Gal. v. 22). 2. From reason. We should rejoice because—(1) God hath given us that power. (2) There is nothing in this world that we can have any solid joy in, because not suitable to the soul. (3) There is none but God we can rationally rejoice in. 3. But doth not God sometimes command us to mourn? (Eccles. iii. 4; Isa. xxii. 12; Joel ii. 12-13). (1) This sorrow consists not in abstaining from spiritual but natural joy. (2) It maketh way for spiritual joy. (3) It should be accompanied with it (Psa. ii. 11). IV. USES. 1. Information. (1) Observe God’s goodness to His creatures in making it their duty to rejoice. (2) The privilege of Christians

above all others (John xvi. 22). (3) The false calumny that is laid on holiness as depriving us of joy (John xiv. 1). (4) Our misery is all from ourselves (Hosea xiii. 9). (5) In the excellency of Christian joy above all others; it is in the Lord. 2. Exhortation: Rejoice. (1) Consider the necessity. God commands it for His glory and the credit of religion. (2) Consider the excellency, above all other joy. (a) It is spiritual, the joy of the soul (Psa. xxxiii. 21). (b) Pure and unmixed (Prov. xiv. 13). (c) Easy and cheap. (d) Real and true. (e) Universal in respect of time, place, and condition. (f) Surpassing (Hab. iii. 17-18). (g) Well grounded; on God's mercy and Christ's merits (1 Pet. i. 8). (h) Full and satisfying (John xvii. 13; Psa. xvi. 11, xvii. 15). (3) Consider this excellency in its nature. (a) In the cause: God; the Father, the Son (John xvii. 13), the Spirit (Gal. v. 22). (b) In the subject; the soul (Luke i. 46-47). (c) The object; the chiefest good. (d) The end: the glory of God as the ultimate, the good of man the subordinate. (e) The effects. It will destroy our sinful joy (Psa. xvi. 11); lessen our esteem of the world (Psa. iv. 7); enlarge our hearts and make them more capacious of heavenly things; facilitate all duties (Neh. viii. 10; Deut. xxviii. 47); make us long more after heaven (Psa. cxix. 20); support us in our afflictions (1 Pet. i. 6-8); defend us against temptations. V. MEANS AND DIRECTIONS. 1. Labour after a right knowledge of God (Psa. ix. 10). 2. Endeavour to get an interest in Him. 3. Get thy evidences clear and keep them so (Job xix. 25; Psa. xxvii. 1). 4. Convince thyself it is thy duty to rejoice. 5. Live above the temperature of the body. 6. Study well the nature of justification (Rom. iv. 5; v. 1). (1) Christ was made sin for us; (2) and we righteous in Him. 7. Have frequent recourse to the promises (Heb. xiii. 5-6). 8. Let the eye of faith be constantly fixed on the attributes of God (Isa. xlv. 24; Psa. lvii. 1, 7). 9. Have a care of what will damp thy joys. (1) Wilful sins. (2) Nice questions about election. (3) Dark providences (Eccles. ix. 1). 10. Often meditate on a Christian's privileges. (1) That He hath God for His Father and portion. (2) Christ for his Advocate (1 John ii. 1). (3) All things working for His good (Rom. viii. 28). (4) A kingdom provided for him (John xiv. 1-2). VI. OBJECTIONS. 1. My sins are many and great. Answer: (1) God's mercies are more and greater (Isa. lv. 7). (2) So are Christ's merits (Heb. vii. 25). (3) So are the promises (Ezek. xviii. 21-22). 2. My corruptions are strong. Answer: (1) They are not too strong for God. (2) Christ came to subdue them. (3) God has promised to subdue them (Heb. x. 16; Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27). 3. The devil oft tempts me. Answer: (1) So he did Christ. (2) He can tempt thee no farther than God sees good. (3) God's grace shall be sufficient for thee. 4. God hath forsaken me. Answer: (1) It is only for a while. (2) He will again receive thee (Isa. xlix. 13-15; Psa. xlii. 11). 5. I have many losses and crosses. Answer: (1) That is no new thing to saints (1 Pet. iv. 12, 13). (2) It is often a sign of God's love (Heb. xii. 6-7; Amos iii. 2). (3) Their end is good (Heb. xii. 10). (4) And their effect (2 Cor. iv. 17; Psa. xlii. 11). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) I. Rejoice in the Lord as your SAVIOUR. When Candace's treasurer found that Jesus had suffered for him on the cross, "he went on his way rejoicing." Our acceptance with God makes heaven rejoice—the return of the prodigal affords the greatest happiness to himself and all others. II. Rejoice in the Lord as your GUIDE. They were journeying on in comparative fear. In tribulation even the saints rejoice because their Saviour will deliver them. III. Rejoice in the Lord as your REWARD. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *Christian joy*:—I. ITS NATURE. The joy of faith—felt not seen—yet real and solid. II. ITS SOURCE AND SECURITY. Christ supplies—sustains it. III. ITS PERPETUITY. it is an apostle's last injunction—must endure for ever. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The joy of Christian brethren*:—The chapter contains a general exhortation to several duties. This verse tells you how to do them—"rejoicing." I. THE APPELATION—"Brethren." By loving compellation he labours to enter into their hearts. If exhortation comes from the pride of man, the pride of man will beat it back. Why are Christians brethren? 1. They have the same beginning of life from the same Father; the same common brother Christ; the same food, the Word of God; the same promises and inheritance. 2. The word is indicative of equality. This should fill up the valleys of hearts dejected here in regard to mean estates; as also pull down the mountains of proud hearts. 3. It is a name of dignity belonging to the heirs of heaven. 4. It is a word of love. II. THE EXHORTATION. 1. It is the Christian's duty to rejoice. It is commanded here. 2. It is reasonable that they should rejoice. They are free from the spiritual Egypt; why should they not sing as the delivered Israelites. They have peace with God and an assured hope. 3. It belongs only to Christians to rejoice.

Others have neither cause nor commandment to do so. III. THE LIMITATION—"In the Lord." 1. In whom? Christ is our Lord—(1) By gift. God has given us all to Him. (2) By conquest. He hath gotten the victory over Satan for us. (3) By marriage. 2. How? (1) By adherence to Him. We must rest contented with Him as our only and sufficient joy. (2) Obedience to His laws; delighting in them. IV. THE MEANS. 1. Faith. It is the sense of our reconciliation that makes us rejoice (Rom. v. 2; 1 Peter i. 6). Whatever strengthens or weakens faith, strengthens or weakens joy. 2. Peace. Whatever disturbs our peace disturbs our joy. 3. Prayer. Pray that your joy may be full. 4. Christian communion. As the two disciples' hearts did burn within them when they talked with Christ. V. QUESTIONS. 1. Why, then, are God's children sorrowful? (1) Their sorrow proceeds from the want of the perfections necessary to make them absolute Christians indeed. (2) They do not adorn their profession, and so God hides the comfortable presence of His Spirit. (3) The sorrow may only be apparent, for their joy is a hidden joy. The feast is kept in the conscience and not always manifest. (4) While they live here they have ever a mixture of joy and grief to temper one another. 2. Is not the Christian fuller of sorrow than of joy? If so, it arises from ignorance of the grounds of comfort or from want of application of them. Let him then—(1) Compare all discomforts with the joy he may have, and he will find that it counter-weighs a world of sorrow, for it is endless, and one day will be full. (2) Take heed of the hindrances of this joy. Sins committed and not repented (1 Chron. ii. 7). (3) Take heed of negligence in good duties and to do them thoroughly. (R. Sibbes, D.D.) *Joy in the Lord*:—Evangelical religion is often charged with making men gloomy, averse to sharing the innocent pleasures of life, and thus has been made repulsive to the young especially. The charge finds some support in the demeanour of many Christians in whom, from defective views of duty, the gospel is not permitted to exert its sweetening power. By such religion is grievously misrepresented. Jesus was "the man of sorrows" because He bore the world's guilt; but when the bitter work was over He was "anointed with the oil of gladness." Christians ought to share this. Being "in the Lord" they should be full of gladness. I. TO THE UNREGENERATE MAN CHRISTIAN JOY IS UNINTELLIGIBLE. It belongs to a sphere with which he has no acquaintance. He sees the restraints which religion imposes, but of its blessed communion with God he sees nothing. Its hopes to him are visionary. He cannot think the yoke of Jesus to be easy. II. TO THE TRUE CHRISTIAN THIS JOY IS REASONABLE, and even when he is not happy he feels he ought to be. 1. It springs from love to Christ. Out in the world we find Marah; its springs are full of bitterness. In Christ, "with joy we draw water from the wells of salvation." 2. The citizens of the spiritual Zion may well be joyful in their King. What city is like ours? Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. God hath called her walls Salvation and her gates Praise. Prosperity is within her palaces. Through her midst flows the river of life, and there is the tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. The King abides amongst us. To all our petitions His ear is open; to all our wants His bounteous hand. His service is glorious liberty. 3. We have perfect security. No power can pluck us out of our Saviour's hand; for with His infinite goodness is conjoined an infinite greatness. 4. In the contemplation of providence there is an unfailing source of joy. The natural satisfaction which outward comforts bring is pervaded and glorified by the thankfulness of hearts rejoicing in their Father's goodness. Anxiety, pain, and bereavement may be appointed to us, but that they are a Father's appointment will prevent despondency and maintain peace. 5. Innocent enjoyments have a new charm "in the Lord." He who began His miracles by contributing to social pleasure, changes the common into the noble and refreshing. Friendship has one added sweetness, nature a new and glorious beauty, and study a satisfaction altogether peculiar, now that intellectual improvement is felt to be polishing a shaft for the Master's quiver. 6. Next to the ineffable delight of seeing Jesus as His Saviour is the delight which fills the believer's heart in helping others to see Him as theirs. III. THE REASONS WHY MANY CHRISTIANS HAVE LITTLE OF THIS JOY are various. In some it is due—1. To temperament. Of this class the Apostle Thomas may be taken as a type. In many, the nervous tendency to religious melancholy develops insanity, as in the case of Cowper. The care of a physician and the watchful love of friends may be of service to joyless Christians. 2. To defective apprehension of the fulness and freeness of the gospel. The glorious liberty has been so little understood that while living in the air of freedom many have fallen back into "the spirit of bondage again to fear." 3. To feeble

spirituality and indulgence in sin. Worldliness, like a killing parasite, has wreathed itself round the energies of the soul. The pleasures of life have stolen away the time from duty. Mists rise from a mind cherishing sinful desire and hide the face of God. We know why David had to pray, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." And all that is well, and it is to be hoped that this gloom is the harbinger of repentance, and the opening of his heart to the Sun of Righteousness. (R. Johnstone, LL.B.)

Joy in the Lord.—The greatest painter—at least one of the greatest painters—of the devoutest period of the Middle Age, a man who, as men said, used to kneel and pray till the angels came to him to be painted, whose works, as they adorn the walls of Florence, open up to us a world we had hardly dreamt of before, —that greatest of painters—Fra Angelico da Fiesole—in some of his most beautiful pictures, has, amidst a multitude of exquisitely-pencilled faces combined in groups, made each face of varying expression, but each expressive gaze of joy and thankfulness steadily fixed upon one central figure—the figure of the Redeemer. (Knox Little.)

The elevating power of joy.—You go out on a bright spring morning into the green fields, you hear above you a voice that thrills you through with pleasure; you don't see anything distinctly; but from the clouds there comes a warbling note, a rising splendour of music, as the lark ascends towards heaven. There is in every cadence the outwelling of an unconscious, yet real, joy. It is a parable of God's working. The little creature, as she ascends and sings, sings and ascends, is simply proclaiming the truth that was seen in the life of Jesus: joy is a power to exalt. (Ibid.)

Joy is not always ecstasy.—We ought not to seek too high joys. We may be bright without transfiguration. The even flow of constant cheerfulness strengthens; while great excitements, driving us with fierce speed, both rack the ship, and end often in explosions. If we were just ready to break out of the body with delight, I know not but we should disdain many things important to be done. Low measures of feeling are better than ecstasies for ordinary life. God sends his rain in gentle drops, else flowers would be beaten to pieces. (H. W. Beecher.)

The importance of Christian joy.—The duty is an important one. The tone of the apostle here and elsewhere brings this out very clearly. Nothing is more calculated to commend the gospel to those around us, than proof that its influence on the hearts which receive it is to make them bright and happy. This commendation is, of course, specially impressive where outward circumstances are of a kind naturally tending to sadden. When, in deep poverty, or on a bed of pain, a Christian is contented, calm, joyous, there is here "an epistle of Christ" written in letters so large and fair, that even careless observers can hardly help reading its testimony to the reality and potency of Divine grace. Where the lights of this world have been in so large a measure withdrawn, it must be plain that such brightness of heart can come only through a beam of sunshine straight from heaven to that heart. For the spiritual progress of the believer himself, too, it is of very much moment that he "rejoice in the Lord." Nehemiah's statement holds true for all time: "The joy of the Lord is your strength." We know the power of happiness, of a genial, buoyant spirit, in carrying forward the ordinary work of life. In the work of the spiritual life—resistance to temptation, and earnest labour for the Master—there is no sustaining power to be compared with joy. Walking in darkness, enveloped in spiritual gloom, we move slowly, stumble, fall. In the sunshine, we press forward with bounding step in the way of God's commandments, "running, and not weary"; wherefore, "O house of Jacob, come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord." (R. Johnstone, LL.B.)

To write the same things to you.—*Repetition*.—That can never be too much taught which cannot be too well learned. By learning the same things often—I. DULL AND UNEXPERT UNDERSTANDINGS ARE MUCH HELPED. II. YOU ARE STIRRED UP INTO GREATER WARINESS THAN OTHERWISE YE WOULD. (H. Airay, D.D.) Dwelling on the same things is necessary even for the best Christians, because—I. TRUTH IS SUPERNATURAL, AND OUR MINDS ARE CARNAL. That therefore which is to keep our changeful minds must be assiduous, or else our minds will sink into their first estate. II. WE OFTEN DISREGARD THE TRUTH AT THE FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD PRESENTATION (Job xxxiii. 14). III. THERE IS SUCH A BREADTH AND DEPTH IN THE WORD OF GOD, THAT ALTHOUGH WE OFTEN HEAR THE SAME THING WE NEVER COME TO UNDERSTAND THE FULL EXTENT. Our souls are narrow. Spiritual meat requires digestion, and therefore repetition. IV. CORRUPTIONS AND WORLDLY BUSINESS TEND TO THRUST OUT THE CONSIDERATION OF THE TRUTH. We cannot have two things in our mind at the same time in strength. Whence it comes to pass that the better being ever subject to be thrust out needs to be hammered in with often repetition. V. OUR MEMORIES ARE VERY WEAK TO RETAIN ANYTHING THAT IS

good. Good things sink through them as water through a sieve; there is need therefore of remembrances. After this manner God hath dealt with man in renewing the promises, and Christ in His parables (Matt. xiii.), although with variety, teaching ministers to avoid tediousness. Conclusion: 1. Let it not be grievous to ministers to do what is for the safety of God's children. Peter cast often and got nothing, yet at Christ's word he cast again. God, that blesseth not every cast, may bless the cast to the catching of many. 2. If we hear the same things often, let us hear them as an impression which may carry force and work upon our hearts more strongly than before. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *The usefulness of repetition*.—1. A story we have often heard or read, however fascinating at first, will gradually lose much of its interest. If read for amusement it would be quite out of the nature of things that a book should please us so much on the second or third perusal as on the first: but if read for instruction the case is somewhat altered. We are conscious that many parts are imperfectly mastered, and we do not hesitate to apply ourselves again and again to the study. But even when instruction is the object, a truth which has once settled in our minds will lose its power of gaining our attention. 2. When we pass from human literature to Divine, we carry our dispositions and habits with us, and we shall be tempted to reckon ourselves so well acquainted with certain portions of the Bible as to reckon further study of them superfluous. Now there is no truth of Christianity that will not repay further outlay of time and attention. Whatever our progress, we are only beginners. Yet while the text sets itself against that craving for novelties in religion which is the mark of a mind diseased, it does not circumscribe the range of inquiry. "The same things" were confined to no narrow groove. I. THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURAL TRUTH DEMONSTRATES THAT REPETITION CAN NEVER BE USELESS. It is a property of the truths of the Bible that the simplest involve the most difficult, while the more sublime and mysterious prove, under some shape or another, the plain and the elementary. It is a simple truth, *e.g.*, that the Eternal Son of God died as the Surety of the lost human race, but you introduce with it a whole library of divinity, for there is not one truth of our religion that is not contained in it—the guilt of sin, the love of God, the Trinity, &c. And if the most elementary doctrine is virtually a summary of the Bible, then to ply men with it is virtually to ply men with the whole system of Christianity. And then if I have the fact that Christ died for sin put continually before me, it is a mistake to suppose that it will always call up the selfsame idea. I shall sometimes view the atonement as demonstrative of Christ's love; sometimes of the greatness of man's sin, &c., &c. And these doctrines derived from the atonement will gain power and clearness from their association with it. And so with the rest. II. THE AGENCY BY WHICH SCRIPTURAL TRUTH IS EXPOUNDED PROVES THE USEFULNESS OF REPETITION. That agency is the Spirit of God. Hence it comes to pass that a text may have been read or heard a hundred times without making any impression, and yet on the next occasion it may seem charged with electric light and the whole mind within disturbed. And what holds good in conversion holds good for the whole course of Christian experience, and thus the Bible, however diligently studied, is always a new book, and its best-known portions instead of being exhausted will often seem to have been indited again. We have, therefore, an incontrovertible reason why "the same things" should be always useful. (*H. Melville, B.D.*) *The repetition of old truth is*.—I. OFTEN NECESSARY. Men let it slip—fail to improve it. II. NEVER WEARISOME. It is precious to those who believe it—who deliver it. III. ALWAYS SAFE. It quickens memory—stirs the heart—provokes effort—and helps to secure salvation. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Repeating the same teaching*.—It was the Sophists who scoffed at Socrates because he was always teaching "the same things," and in this their mockery of the great heathen teacher they but disclosed their own folly. It was the Romanists in Reformation times who frequently laid to the charge of the Reformers that they were always harping upon the same string. It is a mark of the present day still to show a craving for what is new, and to find that craving too eagerly met and administered to; but as Paul knew, so do all preachers of the doctrines of grace know, that if the Divine Word Himself chose to utter the same truths oftentimes in the same form, they have their ample justification in that example of His which to them is also of necessity precept. (*J. Hutchison, D.D.*)

Ver. 3. Beware of dogs.—*The enemies of the Church*.—I. THEIR CHARACTER—"dogs." II. THEIR CONDUCT—"EVIL WORK." III. THEIR DESTRUCTIVE CREED

—“**Concision.**” (*Prof. Eadie.*) *The apostolic warning:*—I. **THE PERSONS WARNED.** 1. All the Philippians, and not merely the pastors. They must beware of false teachers. Christ’s sheep can discern between a wolf and a shepherd (John x. 4–5), and therefore they are bidden to “try the spirits,” and “prove all things.” But how, say the Papists, should common people know the Word to be the Word of God? For answer I would ask such how they know the pope’s canons to be the pope’s? They will say their teachers bring them in the pope’s name, and they believe their teachers. So we believe our teachers, who tell us this is and that is not the Word of God. But they object that this makes every man a judge. I answer, there is a manner of judging, viz., that by which we discern of anything, which every Christian must have, so that it cannot be a plea to him at the day of judgment to say, “My teacher did mislead me.” Every one must discern between good and bad. For he that knows not his Master’s will shall be beaten. 2. Not only young and ordinary Christians are to beware, but also the best settled. The Philippians were a Church established in the truth. II. **THE WARNING GIVEN**—“Beware,” which signifies to discern, and then to avoid. Those who are aware of evil will beware of it. The Church is even subject to danger; and God suffers it to be so. 1. To try those who are true and who false. 2. To try the good so as to make them better. III. **THE PERSONS WARNED AGAINST.** 1. **Wicked men and dogs.** (1) Without the Church all are dogs. (2) The dogs within the Church first fawn upon their intended victims (Rom. xvi. 18), and when they cannot prevail by flattery they snarl and bark against them, by slanders and open scoffs, when they cannot bite. When they can they persecute with fire and sword. 2. **Evil workers.** (1) Seducing men from Christ. (2) Wicked livers. 3. The **concision.** They make divisions in the Church. IV. **HOW TO TAKE THE WARNING.** 1. Get fundamental truths into the heart and love them (2 Thess. ii. 10). None are seduced but such as are cold in love. 2. Practice that we know, and God will give us a fuller measure of knowledge, whereby we shall know seducers. (John vii. 17). 3. Pray to God for wisdom to discern of schisms and ill-disposed persons. 4. Let us look that we keep in us a holy fear and reverence of God (Psa. xxv. 12). (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) **Dogs:**—Paul calls the false teachers such in respect of—I. **THEIR SNARLING AND BARKING**, because as dogs they barked at him and snarled at his doctrine, and that, as dogs again, not upon reason but custom. Abishai called Shimei a dog in respect of his causeless barking against David (2 Sam. xvi. 9). II. **THEIR GREEDINESS**, making, as he afterwards said, “their belly their god” (Isa. lvi. 11). III. **THEIR ABSURDNESS**, because as the dog returneth to his vomit, so they made the converted Jews return to their old Judaism. (*H. Aitay, D.D.*) **Dogs:**—St. Paul retorts upon the Judaizers the term of reproach by which they stigmatized the Gentiles as impure. In the Mosaic law the word is used to denounce the foul prodigies of heathen worship (Deut. xxi. 19). Among the Jews of the Christian era, it was a common designation of the Gentiles involving the idea of ceremonial impurity. St. John applies the term to those whose moral impurity excludes them from the new Jerusalem, the spiritual Israel (Rev. xxi. 15). As a term of reproach, the word on the lips of a Jew signified chiefly “impurity;” of a Greek, “impudence.” The herds of dogs which prowl about Eastern cities, without a home or owner, feeding on the refuse of the streets, quarrelling among themselves, and attacking the passer by, explain both applications of the image. Thus St. Paul’s language is strikingly significant. They speak of themselves as God’s children; they boast of eating at God’s table; they reproach us as dogs, as foul and unclean, as outcasts from the covenant because, forsooth, we eat meat bought at the shambles, and do not observe the washing of cups and platters. I reverse the image. We are the children of God, for we banquet on the spiritual feast which God has spread before us: they are the dogs, for they greedily devour the garbage of carnal ordinances, the very refuse of God’s stable (ver. 8). (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) **Evil workers.**—Paul calls them so in respect—I. **OF THE WORKS THEY URGED**, because by preaching the necessity of works unto salvation, and joining them with Christ as workers together with Him of our salvation, they made those works which in themselves were not evil, evil works. II. **OF THE EVIL MIND WHEREIN THEY URGED THOSE WORKS**, in hatred of him, and to cross that which he had taught touching the sole sufficiency of Christ’s righteousness unto salvation. III. **OF THEIR UNFAITHFUL WORKING IN THE LORD’S VINEYARD**, because together with good seed they did sow tares, joining with Christ the works of the law in the work of our salvation. (*H. Aitay, D.D.*) **Beware of the concision.**—These Philippians had admitted certain new men that preached traditional and additional doctrines,

the law with the gospel, Moses with Christ, circumcision with baptism. To these new converts these new doctors inculcated often that charm, "Ye are the circumcision" whom God hath sealed to Himself; will you break this seal? Now St. Paul meets with these men in their own haunt, and even in the sound of the word they so often pressed. "They press upon you circumcision, but beware of concision, of tearing the Church of God; for we are the circumcision. If, therefore, they set up another, and continue a figure after the substance Christ Jesus is manifested, a legal circumcision in the flesh after the spiritual circumcision of the heart, their end is not circumcision but concision." 1. BEWARE. This caveat shows us—1. God's loathness to lose us. That we are here now is sufficient argument for this. Who of us has not done something since yesterday that has made him unworthy to be here to-day? If God were weary of me, and would fain be rid of me, He could find enough in me now and here to let me perish. Is not the spirit of slumber in me, the spirit of detraction in another, of impunience and facility to admit temptations in others, enough to justify Him? But He would not have the death of any, but would have all men be saved, and so says, "beware." 2. Consider the way by which He leads us to Him. He declares His will towards us in a law. He bids and forbids. There had passed a contract between us and Him—Believe, do, and thou shalt live. We say, "Thy will be done," which supposes that that will is made known. And that will has been manifested in the law within, the Mosaic law, and the gospel, and not only does God thus speak to us, but He calls upon us; gives us a law and bids us "beware" of breaking it. 3. Nothing exalts God's goodness more than this, that He multiplies the means of mercy, so that no man can say, Once I might have been saved, once God opened to me a door, but I neglected that, and God never came more. (1) God hath spoken once in His Scriptures, and we have heard Him twice (Psa. lxii. 11) at home in our own reading, and again and again in His ordinances. (2) There is a language in the heavens (Psa. xix. 2). This is the true harmony of the spheres which every man may hear. Though he understand no tongue but his own, he may hear God in the seasons, in the vicissitudes of Church and State, &c. This is God's English to thee, and His French, Latin, Greek, to others. (3) But then God translates Himself in particular works. Nationally: He speaks in particular judgments or deliverances to one nation. Domestically: He speaks that language to a particular family; and so personally. God will make a fever speak to me that there is no health in me; my adversity that there is no safe dependence but in Him; even my sin shall be a sermon to me. (4) God hath spoken to us in the death and resurrection of His Son. II. BEWARE OF THE CONCISION. There is a certain elegant and holy delicacy and juvenility in St. Paul's choosing the words of musical cadence—circumcision, concision; but then this presents matter of gravity. Language must wait upon matter, and words upon things. Concision is the severing of that which should be entire—in the state, the aliening of the head from the body; in the Church to constitute a monarchy, an universal head; in the family, to divide man and wife. But more particularly consider—1. The concision of the body; disunion in doctrinal things. (1) This that should be kept entire is Jesus. (2) "Every spirit which dissolveth Jesus" (1 John iv. 3), that makes religion serve turns, that admits so much gospel as may advance present businesses, every such spirit is not of God. (3) Not to profess the whole gospel, not to believe all the articles of faith, this is a breaking of what should be entire. (4) The advancement of a private interpretation to an article of faith mars the peace and rends the unity of the Church. Let us therefore (Psa. cxxxvii. 6) prefer Jerusalem before our chief joy, love of peace by or forbearance on all sides, rather than victory by wrangling and uncharitableness. 2. The concision of the garment; disunion in ceremonial things. To a circumcision of the garment, to a paring away such ceremonies as were superstitious and superfluous, we came at the beginning of the Reformation. But those churches that came to a concision of the garment, an absolute taking away of all ceremonies, neither provided so safely for the Church itself nor for her devotion. Ceremonies are nothing, but where there are none order and obedience, and, presently, religion, will vanish. 3. And therefore beware of tearing the body or the garment, lest the third be induced, the tearing of thine own spirit from that rest it should receive in God; for when thou has lost thy hold of those handles which God reaches out to thee in the ministry of His Church, and hast no means to apply the promises of God to thy soul, when anything falls upon thee to overcome thy moral constancy, thou wilt soon sink into desperation, which is the fearfullest concision of all. When God hath made me a partaker of

the Divine nature, so that now in Christ Jesus He and I are one, this were a dissolving of Jesus of the worst kind imaginable to tear myself from Jesus, or by any suspicion of His mercy, or any horror of my own sins, to come to think myself to be none of His. 1. This is treason against the Father; a cutting off of the power of God. 2. Treason against the Son; a cutting off of the wisdom of God. 3. Treason against the Holy Ghost; the cutting off of comfort. (*John Donne, D.D.*)

Ver. 3. For we are the circumcision.—In all ages and under all dispensations there have been two antagonistic principles at work, two classes among the professed people of God; the carnal and the spiritual; those who relied on externals and those who relied on what is internal, an Israel according to the flesh, and an Israel according to the spirit. The great question between the two has ever been and is, Who are the circumcision? the true people of God? I. What is meant by "WE ARE THE CIRCUMCISION?" Circumcision in the Old Testament was—1. The symbol of regeneration. 2. The sign and seal of a covenant. It distinguished the people of God from other men, and assured them of their interest in the blessings of the covenant. The question therefore is tantamount to this: Who are the people of God in such a sense as to be His spiritual children and heirs of His kingdom? The Judaizers said they were—Paul said Christians were. II. THE CHARACTERISTICS of those who are the true people of God or the true circumcision. 1. They worship God in the Spirit, *i.e.*, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. (1) This includes (a) that the inward principle of worship is no mere principle of nature, whether fear, natural reverence, or sentiment, but that love and devotion of which the Holy Spirit is the author. (b) That the mode of worship is that which the Holy Spirit has enjoined. It is not a will worship, not the assiduous performance of things uncommanded of God, whether in matters of worship or life. (2) It therefore stands opposed to (a) insincere, hypocritical service; (b) mere external and ceremonial service; (c) all such service as the unrenowned and unspiritual do or can render. Such was Jewish and Judaizing worship; and all formalism, whether Papal or Protestant. 2. They rejoice or glory in Christ Jesus. This includes the recognition of Him (1) as the ground of our confidence; (2) as the source of honour; (3) as the object of delight. How opposite is this spirit to that of the Judaizers, who gloried in the law, the theocracy, and their descent from Abraham. 3. They do not confide in the flesh. "Flesh" includes (a) what is external, whether Abraham's descent or circumcision; external obedience to the law, or religious ceremonies; baptism or membership in the true Church. This is Paul's interpretation as given in the immediate context. (b) What is opposed to spirit, *i.e.*, nature. (2) To have no confidence in it, therefore, means to have no confidence in ourselves, our own righteousness or strength. This also is included in Paul's amplification. Those who do not trust in the flesh are those who renounce their own righteousness and embrace that of God, which is by the faith of Christ. Conclusion: It is by these criteria that we are to judge ourselves, and to determine the true form of religion, and of the Church. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) The true circumcision:—I. SPIRITUAL WORSHIP. 1. There must be present worship. The rite of circumcision was administered once for all, and as an external badge this was sufficient. But true religion is a matter of daily life. A circumcised Jew who lived in sin was no true Jew; a baptized Christian may behave like a man of the world, in which case his baptism counts for nothing. The heart and soul of religion is personal devotion, daily worship. 2. This worship must be an inspiration of the Spirit of God. All worship requires some support. The formal worship of the Jew rested on ceremonies. When these were absent the worship perished. The Christian rests upon the influences of the Spirit, and where this is there is Divine life. II. CHRISTIAN ENTHUSIASM. The expression "glory in Christ Jesus," points to this. 1. The secret of the deepest religious life is personal devotion to Christ. Jesus at once demands adoration by His Spiritual greatness, and wins affection by His human sympathy. 2. This devotion is inspired by joyous enthusiasm. The Jew gloried in Abraham, but a greater than Abraham is here. III. FREEDOM FROM SUPERSTITION. For us, like Paul (see sequel), to cast off all confidence in privileged birth in a Christian home, membership in a historic Church, observance of venerable rites, and to trust wholly in spiritual religion, is a confirming sign of Divine sonship better than any rite such as circumcision. (*W. F. Adeney, M.A.*) The true circumcision.—I. THE SACRAMENTS OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS ARE IN SUBSTANCE THE SAME. The Philippian who were baptized with water and the Holy Ghost are said to be circumcised. And so the apostle attributes our baptism and Lord's supper after a

sort to the Church of the Jews (1 Cor. x. 1-2). As the covenant was always the same in substance, so the seals of it were the same too. II. THE REALITY OF THAT WHICH SEDUCERS PRETEND TO, WILL MORE READILY BE FOUND IN THOSE THAT CONSCIENTIOUSLY OPPOSE THEM. These men ran down the apostle and others, giving out themselves only for the circumcised ones. But the apostle proves he had the better claim. Thus the works of holiness are to be found more with those that press justification by faith, than with others who would be looked on as great patrons of good works. Be not, then, deceived with fair speeches; examine matters to the bottom. Often those who have the highest pretences to right on their side go furthest from it. III. THE SIGN IN RELIGION WITHOUT THE THING SIGNIFIED IS LITTLE WORTH. 1. All it can do is to give a name before men which they lose before God (Rom. ii. 28-29). Christian may be an honourable title before men, and an empty title before God. 2. The sign is a mere external thing on which nothing of weight for salvation can hang, and therefore when the Lord comes to judgment, He throws down all together (Jer. ix. 25-26). For He looks not to the outward appearance but to the heart. 3. It is an inefficacious thing; as a body without a spirit. He who has got the sign only, has only the meanest half of the sacrament. Sacraments are seals of the covenant; but where there is no covenant there can be no seal; and what avails a seal at a blank. 4. Men in Christ's livery may abide in the devil's service and meet with his doom (Luke xiii. 26-27). 5. To apply all this. (1) Baptism with water without the Holy Spirit is little worth. Many never reflect seriously on their baptism. Hence they live as though they had never sworn allegiance to the King of heaven, and were entirely their own, and will never renew it. Let me ask as touching this baptism: (a) Baptized ye were with water, but were ye ever baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire—the thing signified? Alas, in consequence of the want of this, the universal coldness in the things of God. (b) Hast thou realized that only the blood and Spirit of Christ can cleanse thee? In baptism is a profession of this. If not what avails thy baptism. (c) Wast thou ever made partaker of the washing of regeneration? (Tit. iii. 5-6). Unto what then were ye baptized? (Acts xix. 2). (d) Where ye ever cut off from the old stock of Adam and ingrafted into Christ? (1 Cor. xii. 13). Baptized into the name of Christ, and yet not in Christ, but without Him makes sad work. (e) Are lusts reigning: or are they dying, and your souls living a new life? (Rom. vi. 5-6). Has the water been but as that thrown upon a corpse? (2) The Lord's supper without the thing signified is little worth. To be partakers of the bread of the Lord without the bread which is the Lord will go but small length (John vi. 57). IV. BELIEVERS IN CHRIST ARE THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION. They have in spirit which the Jews, by this ordinance, only had in the letter. Circumcision was—1. A token of God's covenant (Gen. xvii. 7-11). This honour have all God's saints to have God Himself to be ours. 2. A distinction between Jews and others, as God's people (Gen. xvii. 4). So believers are God's people, His garden, while others are but His out field. 3. A cutting off of part of the flesh, signifying the believer's privilege and duty (Col. ii. 11). Their hearts are circumcised to love the Lord; their ears to hear Him; their lips to speak for Him. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *The marks of a true Christian:*—There are many things that have a name to live and are dead: faith without works; the form of godliness without the power; sacraments without holy desires; Christians without union with Christ. In exposing this the apostle's intention was not to disparage the Old Testament sacraments, but to show that in common with the New their value consisted in their spiritual use and significance, in their connection with the moral affections, in their leading to Him who is the end of all sacraments. Consider—I. THE NATURE OF A BELIEVER'S WORSHIP. 1. The word worship may be taken in the larger sense which includes all religious service. From which we learn that the believer's life is to be one continued act of worship; his body is a living temple; his heart an altar for daily sacrifice; his calling that of "a priest unto God;" his whole conversation one hymn of praise. To worship God in the spirit, then, is to worship Him in the life. The fire of sacrifice is to come down on the domestic hearth, and "holiness unto the Lord" is to be written "on the bells of the horses." 2. Still the reference to the Old Testament ritual would suggest that "worship" points to certain religious actions. To worship God in the spirit, then, is to worship Him—(1) In simplicity as distinguished from hypocrisy. It is a fearful thing when a miser prays to be delivered from covetousness, a vindictive man from "malice, hatred," &c. (2) With reverence, as distinguished from all permitted indifference, deadness, reluctance, clock-work piety. Our heart and tongue should go together. Moses left his sandals at the foot of the

mount, too many take their sandals and leave their hearts behind. (3) In earnestness, as if we felt that important interests were suspended. The two worships are distinguished in that in one case an end is looked for, in the other the only care is to get the work done. II. THE OBJECT OF THE BELIEVER'S JOY. We rejoice in Christ Jesus. 1. For the glory of His character. 2. For the dignity of His offices. 3. The blessedness of His work. 4. The completeness of His salvation. 5. The freedom of His service. 6. The reasonableness of His commands. 7. The unutterable recompences of His rewards. III. THE GROUND OF A BELIEVER'S TRUST. 1. By "the flesh" St. Paul means anything that we are or have. The flesh in its best estate is a corrupt thing, and can therefore be no proper ground for confidence. 2. The apostle would take away our confidence from everything that is not Christ. He not only excludes all outward distinctions, national privileges, moral excellencies and attainments, but he strikes at that refined and subtle fallacy of Romanism which would lead us to have confidence in some indwelling grace, which would give efficacy to tears and perfection to human sanctity. St. Paul knew that it was not grace in the saints, but grace in Christ, that was to save him, and in that he could feel unbounded confidence. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The inheritors of the promises*:—I. THE GROUND OF THE APOSTLE'S CLAIM. 1. To worship God in the spirit is—(1) To worship God as a spirit. (2) With our own spirit. (3) By the help of the Holy Spirit. To worship God in the flesh would be to worship God as though He were flesh, with the powers of the body alone, and by the influences and aids which work on the body (John iv. 23; Mal. i. 11). 2. To rejoice in Christ Jesus is not only to believe in Him and receive Him, but gladly and gratefully to accept all His work and gifts and services, being cleansed by His blood, made righteous by His obedience, and being reconciled by His mediation (1 Pet. i. 8). And if we connect this with the former, then it means to worship, pleading Christ's sacrifice, trusting in His advocacy, and making Him in all respects our way to God. 3. Having no confidence, &c. What he means by flesh is evident from the words following—the administration of ordinances, birth of high noble blood, earnest external obedience. The flesh is the outward and material, not the inward and spiritual. Now, if we connect this third qualification with the first, to have no confidence in the flesh is to use the material without abusing it, making it secondary and subservient, to employ as much of the outward form in worship as is essential to spirit and life, but never as a substitute. II. THE LOFTY POSITION PAUL CLAIMS. The practice of circumcision existed, it may be, before it was imposed on Abraham, but it was ordained by God mainly with a spiritual object (Gen. xvii. 10, &c.), as the sign and seal of the Divine covenant; it testified to God's faithfulness. What advantage, then, hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? (Rom. ix. 4-5). Like privileges are possessed by such as worship God in the spirit, &c. 1. They are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. 2. They behold the brightness of the Father's glory (John i. 14, 18). 3. They are the inheritors of great and precious promises. Even the promises made to Abraham are theirs (Rom. iv. 11-13, 16; Gal. iii. 7-9). But the believer is interested in a better covenant, established in better promises. (1) A country was promised to Abraham—a good land; but Canaan shared in the universal curse. But the land promised to the Christian is a better country. (2) It was promised to Abraham that his seed should become a great nation—those who rejoice in Christ are a holy nation, a peculiar people. (3) God promised to Abraham to be his God, &c., and so (2 Cor. vi. 18)—4. They are favoured with special Divine revelations (Heb. viii. 10-11; 2 Cor. iii. 18). 5. They are a royal priesthood. 6. They are connected with an ancient and sacred lineage. The Jew claimed Abraham as his father, and all the illustrious patriarchs and prophets as ancestors; but they whom Paul describes may claim as ancestors all who have like precious faith in every age. 7. While of the Israelites as concerning the flesh Christ came; of those, whom Paul describes, Christ comes as a gospel and a revelation to the world (2 Cor. ii. 14-15; iii. 2-3). Conclusion: 1. Let us claim to be the circumcision in the presence of the Jew. To him, if he rejoice not in Christ Jesus we say, Your circumcision is counted uncircumcision: We are Abraham's seed, and he is an alien. We envy not his connection by blood; we have a tie less corruptible. 2. We claim this position as Christians of simple customs, in spite of some who would withhold it because we follow not with them. We notice the stress which such lay upon consecrated edifices, sacramental efficacy, an authorized ministry, uniformity. We affirm that spiritual worship consecrates any structure, constitutes the worshipper a priest, and renders the simplest forms full of power and life. 3. We claim this in the face of

the world; and if men demand of us a style and order of worship which would undermine spirituality, divert our complacency from Christ, and foster confidence in the flesh, let us not only not conform to their requirements, but let us deny that conformity would secure any increase of acceptableness or power. (1) Of power! What is mightier than spiritual worship? What show of strength exceeds that manifest by rejoicing in Jesus? And is "no confidence in the flesh" loss of power (Jer. xvii. 5-8). (2) And is there no beauty in simplicity? The utmost and highest is to be found in an assembly which worships God, &c. 4. Let us in godly fellowship with all true churches maintain this position. (*S. Martin.*) *Spiritual heirship*:—1. A scholar trained at the feet of Gamaliel kneels before the Father "in spirit"; a Pharisee of the strictest sect has his shrunk heart expanded into "joy in Christ Jesus"; a proud professor feels "no confidence in the flesh." "We are the circumcision," he says, after this thorough readjusting of His religious relations. He thought so, as a Jew, when there was none to dispute the claim. As a Christian, with all Jewry despising that claim, he is sure of it. 2. Now to be able to say, "We are the circumcision," to be clearly conscious of standing in the right line of spiritual descent is no mean distinction, no unproductive element in our expectations, that we should alienate it without cause. I. **THOUGHTFUL STUDENTS CAN HARDLY DOUBT THAT GOD HAS MEANT HIS CHURCH TO MAINTAIN AN HISTORIC UNITY.** No bend in its growth has ever been so abrupt as to choke the sap or sever the commerce of any branch with the root. Each moral revolution no less than each theological variation proves that the essence of faith is not perishable. Something of primitive power goes into the least offshoot. The three dispensations lay their ordaining hands on its head, with patriarchal blessings, Levitical unction, and gospel baptism. Let any holy family pitch its tent where it will, it shall not be out of that Divine order; reaching backward and forward—Calvary, Sinai, Mamre. II. **BUT BLENDED WITH THIS LAW OF ITS HISTORY, THE CHURCH HAS TO RECOGNIZE ANOTHER, constantly counterbalancing the gravitation towards indolence which might accrue from the former alone, and checking its complacency.** For as it advances, some unexpected crisis is always breaking up the old distribution of forces; the original Providence readjusts the lines. Dismissing former tests of legitimacy, it brings fresh affiliations into the family, showing those often to be of "the circumcision" that had before been reckoned of the alienage; and disowning sons who forfeit favour by sinning against the Holy Ghost. Men claim to be Christians by birth; offer as a spiritual qualification, not a confession of faith, but a pedigree. Something like this has always been a presumption of religious majorities. And, as if to rebuff it, the propensity to proscription is no sooner settled, than a reformation is sent to disturb it. Some Paul of Samosata, some Constantine, or some Popish lineage is always secularizing the Church, and then some impracticable Wycliffe, dissenting Baxter, or erratic Huss, sloughs the form to act out the substance. Hypocrites vitiate the succession, and heretics ennoble the new blood. When the Jews refuse the apostle of their salvation, lo! he turns to the Gentiles. As if purposely to break up confidence in mere ecclesiasticism and clear the gospel of bondage, the visible Church is scarcely at any epoch suffered to enfold the Church spiritual with a clear circumference. And the instant any majority begins to be at ease in Zion, some terrible prophet comes crying out of the wilderness, "Repent!" shows what circumcision is, and turns the world of the Rabbis upside down. But always, observe, the old faith goes into the living body. (*Bishop Huntington.*) **Worship God in the Spirit.**—*Spiritual worship*:—I. **WHAT IT IS TO WORSHIP GOD IN THE SPIRIT.** 1. Christ has respect to the whole of our service and obedience to God. The parts of it are two: holiness, or our duty to God; righteousness, or our duty to man (Luke i. 74-75). The Christian life is, as it were, one continued act of worship, where all our actions, natural, civil, and religious, meet in God (Acts xxvi. 7; Rev. vii. 15). 2. It has respect to those duties which are properly parts of worship. The Christian (1) worships God with his heart, soul, and spirit, and not with his body only (Rom. i. 9; John iv. 24). This implies (a) internal worship, called for by the first commandment. The true Christian's soul is a temple of God. (b) Outward joined to inward (1 Cor. vi. 20). (c) Spirituality—faith; love; goodwill; sincerity. (2) By assistance from and influence of the Holy Spirit (Eph. vi. 18; Jude 20). (a) The Spirit gives habitual grace to make men capable of spiritual worship (John iii. 6). (b) He gives actual grace, influences to stir up grace (Rom. vii. 26). II. **THIS WORSHIP IS A DISTINGUISHING MARK OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN.** 1. All true Christians have it, for—(1) All of them are spiritual (John iii. 6). Everything that brings forth, brings forth its like.

(2) All of them have the Spirit of God dwelling in them (Rom. viii. 9). (3) That worship which is merely outward is but the carcase of duties, unacceptable to God; and they who never perform more are hypocrites (Matt. xv. 7-8). (4) External worship is properly but the means of worship. Prayer, hearing, &c., tend to the promotion of love, trust, &c., and the enjoyment of God can never be found but in worshipping Him in the Spirit. 2. That none but true Christians have this privilege is plain from this, that all others are in the flesh (Jude 19). (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *God should be worshipped*.—I. WITH A KNOWLEDGE OF HIS TRUE CHARACTER. Otherwise it is mere Athenian worship. This is the great fault of the heathen. Hence the great importance of religious knowledge. This may be obtained from nature, and our own persons. And yet with all the perfections of deity before their eyes men do not like to retain God in their knowledge. But as man is a fallen creature, the knowledge which reason can furnish is not sufficient. Christ does not reveal His mercy, and show how sinners can be pardoned and restored. So God has revealed Himself in His Word, and now man is utterly without excuse if he do not know God and worship Him. II. WITH REVERENCE. This sentiment is natural when we come before any superior, how much more when we come before God. This is no slavish or superstitious dread, but that by virtue of which God's children are distinguished from the wicked who have no fear of God before their eyes. God is a jealous God, and abominates levity. Reverence is the most prominent feature of angelic worship. How shocking then is familiarity in the worship of man. III. HUMILITY. Nothing is more odious to God than pride, and nothing more acceptable than the contrite spirit. He dwells with such. It is most proper in regard to man's moral and God's exalted state, and upon it Christ pronounced his beatitudes. IV. FAITH. Without this it is impossible to please God, and all worship must become an empty form. Its principal exercise has respect to Christ as the Mediator. V. CONCENTRATION. Spiritual worship is interrupted by nothing so much as the wandering of our thoughts, and is one of the accusations brought against God's ancient people. VI. FERVENCY. The crying defect of our worship is want of heart. VII. SCRIPTURAL, with such rites as God has appointed, and those only. As to external circumstances, time, place, attitude, these should be regulated by the apostle's rule, "Let all things be done decently and in order;" but as it relates to the worship itself, nothing should be introduced but what is authorized by the Scriptures, such as prayer, singing, reading, administering the sacraments. "In vain do they worship Me," &c. "Who hath required this at your hands." VIII. FREQUENCY. Men are not required to spend their whole time at it. But God should be worshipped morning and evening; and the Lord's day should be entirely devoted to the Lord's service. We cannot go to an excess here unless we make this duty exclude others which are equally incumbent. "Pray without ceasing." (*A. Alexander, D.D.*) *Rejoice in Christ Jesus*.—*Rejoicing in Christ Jesus*.—I. ITS NATURE. 1. It is an act of love. The acts of love are desire and delight, and they both agree in this that they are conversant about good, and are founded in esteem. But they differ because desire is the motion and exercise of love, and delight the quiet and repose of it. All, however, meet in Christ. 2. It is an act of love begotten in us by the sense of the love of Christ (1 John iv. 19). The object of love is goodness. (1) The goodness that is in Christ, moral and beneficial (Psa. cxix. 140; c. 5; cxix. 68). (2) The goodness that floweth from Him (Titus iii. 4). (3) The goodness we expect from Him in this world and the next (Luke vii. 47; Matt. v. 12). 3. This love of Christ—(1) Is revealed in the gospel (Acts xiii. 48). (2) Is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost (Rom. v. 5). (3) Is received by faith (1 Pet. i. 18; Rom. xv. 13), which faith is (a) assent, a certain belief of the truth of the gospel concerning Christ as the only sufficient Saviour (John iv. 42; vi. 69). (b) Consent, a readiness to obey the gospel. (c) Alliance, a reposing of our hearts on God's promise of pardon and eternal life (Heb. iii. 6). (4) Is improved by meditation (Psa. civ. 34). (5) Is enjoyed more than all other things whatsoever (Psa. xxxv. 9; lxiii. 5; lxxiii. 25). II. THE SPIRITUAL PROFIT OF IT. 1. It is such a joy as doth enlarge the heart in duty and strengthens us in the way of God (Neh. viii. 10; Psa. cxix. 14; xl. 8). The hardest services are sweetened by the love of Christ. 2. It is a cordial to fortify us against and to sweeten—(1) Common afflictions (Hab. iii. 17-18; Rom. xii. 12; Heb. xii. 2). (2) Persecutions (Acts v. 41; Heb. x. 34; Matt. v. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 13; James i. 2). 3. It draws off the heart from the delights of the flesh. III. THE HELPS BY WHICH IT IS RAISED IN US. 1. A sense of sin and misery. The grievousness of the disease makes recovery the more delightful. 2. An entire

confidence in Christ (1 Pet. ii. 7; Phil. iii. 8). 3. A constant use of the means. (1) The Word; (2) prayer (John xvi. 24). (3) The sacraments. 4. Sincerity of obedience (1 Cor. v. 8). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Rejoicing in Christ is*—I. A HOLY COMPLACENCY IN HIM. We cannot be well pleased with anything unless we see a suitableness in it to us. There is a threefold suitableness of Christ. 1. A suitableness to the Divine perfections concerned in the salvation of sinners that is sweetly discerned by the believer and acquiesced in (1 Cor. i. 23–24). 2. A suitableness of Christ to the case of the soul which the believer sees and is pleased with. If you lodge a starving man in a palace, clothe him with costly attire, and fill his pockets with gold, what good can these do him? They are not meat, and so are not suitable to his case. But Christ is to ours every way (1 Cor. i. 30–31), and no one else is. (1) As He is God-man; the Mediator answering at once the honour of God and the sinner's necessities. (2) In His offices. As Prophet, the Interpreter of the Father's mind; as Priest, the Atonement and Intercessor; as King, the Conqueror and Ruler. 3. A suitableness to the mind, or we could not rejoice in Him. He is suited to every unbeliever's case, but alas! not to their minds. Give a natural man his idols, the drunkard his cups, the miser his gold, these are suitable to their mind, but as unsuitable to their case as a sword for a madman or poison for the sick. But the believer is made partaker of the Divine nature, and Christ is, therefore, suitable not only to his case but to his mind (1 Pet. ii. 4; Psal. lxxiii. 25). There is none beside Him, none like Him, none after Him—the altogether lovely. Believers are pleased at heart—(1) That He should build the temple of the Lord, and have the glory of it (Zech. vi. 12–13) as is appointed of God. But this suits not the minds of natural men (1 Pet. ii. 7–8). (2) With His laws (Isa. xxxiii. 22). Christ's yoke is welcome to them because His law is suitable to them, and they to it (Psal. cxix. 128), for it is written on their hearts. (3) With the fulness of the spirit of sanctification which He communicates (1 Cor. i. 30–31). There is nothing the true believer rejoices in more than the Christ-given spirit of holiness imparted, enjoyed, and acted on. II. A ROLLING OF THE SOUL OVER ON HIM FOR ALL. 1. Their weight of guilt—"through faith in His blood" (Rom. iii. 25). Christ is the city of refuge from the law. 2. Their weight of duties. (1) For performance. Christ lays His yoke upon the believer, and he receives it and lays himself and it again on Christ the fountain of strength. Hence it becomes an easy yoke, which before was insupportable. For duties are a dead weight while laid on by the hand of the law (John xv. 5), but from Christ the believer receives a kind of derived omnipotency (Phil. iv. 13; ii. 13). He makes the will for the work, and the work for us when He has wrought the will for it. (2) For acceptance (Heb. xi. 4). Duties rightly done are the returns of influences from heaven which are communicated from Christ, and so go back through Him. III. A REST OF THE HEART IN CHRIST AS A FIT MATCH FOR THE SOUL. For as in marriage there is first a view of such a person as a fit match, whereupon follows choice and acceptance; and in case the person chosen answer the expectation, there ariseth a rest which is solid joy, so it is when the soul is pleased with Christ. There is found in Him—1. Rest for the conscience: otherwise there is none except where it be lulled to sleep. Now Christ finds His elect seeking rest and finding none in the law; He gives it them through His blood (Heb. ix. 14; 1 John i. 7). 2. Rest for the heart. (1) Our hearts are full of desires of happiness which crave for satisfaction. Hence universal human restlessness. (2) The natural man goeth through the dry places of the creature seeking rest and finding none (Jer. ii. 3; Eccles. x. 15; Isa. lv. 2). Christ finds His elect thus wandering, and discovers Himself as the fountain of satisfaction, and the desires of the soul centreing and meeting in Christ abide in Him and are satisfied (Psal. lxxiii. 25; Phil. iv. 18; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5). IV. A CONFESSION OF CHRIST UNTO SALVATION. This is plainly intimated in the original "glorying in Christ." As the image of God impressed on man's soul at creation shone through his body, as a candle through a lantern, so that complacency, confidence, and rest of the heart in Christ will shine forth in the life. 1. With respect to the believer's ordinary conversation. (1) This inward rejoicing wears off the air of pride (1 Pet. v. 5). (2) Grace will circumscribe the self-commending lips. (3) Gracious souls will readily discover in their serious converse a tendency towards the grace of Christ. (4) Rejoicing in Christ will make men tender in their judgment of others (Gal. vi. 1). (5) Such as rejoice in Christ will have familiar converse with the Word, and relish of it (Isa. lix. 21). (6) They will have a respect to the place where Christ's honour dwells, and to ordinances (Psal. lxxiii. 1–2). 2. With respect to suffering. (1) The saints will keep on Christ's side though it be lowest. (2)

They will be resigned and contented. (3) They will glory in any cross Christ puts upon them. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Glorying in Christ*.—I. **NEGATIVELY.** The true circumcision gloried not—1. In themselves. 2. In anything about themselves—circumcision or Abrahamic descent. 3. In Christ and something else—in Him and Moses. II. **POSITIVELY.** They gloried in Christ. 1. In His great condescension. 2. In His birth and its wonders. 3. In His life and its blessings. 4. In His death and its benefits. 5. In His resurrection and ascension, and their pledges. 6. In His return, and its stupendous and permanent results. (*Prof. Eadie.*) Have no confidence in the flesh.—This is an inference from the last, and means that the Christian who rejoices in Christ hath no confidence in anything that is not Christ or in Christ. I. **IN POINT OF JUSTIFICATION.** 1. The saints have no confidence in external things. (1) Man's externals—things which God never made duty, but are made so by man (*Matt. xv. 9*). All unscriptural institutions, opinions, and practices, under whatever pretensions of holiness, carry off men from Christ and are subservient to self (*Matt. xv. 4-6*; *Col. 18-21*). (2) Nor even in God's externals. *E.g.* (a) In their external condition in the world which we receive by God's providence. The carnal poor think that thereby they will be relieved of eternal poverty, and the carnal rich in this world, that they will be before others in the world to come (*Hos. xii. 8*; *Rom. xiv. 17*). You may be miserable here and through eternity (*Job. xv. 23-24*); or fare sumptuously here and be in torment by and by (*Luke xvi.*). (b) In their external privileges (*vers. 5, 7*; *2 Cor. v. 16*; *Luke xiii. 26-27*). (c) In their external attainments (*vers. 6-7*). Great confidence have some in their negative holiness (*Luke xviii. 11*; *Matt. v. 20*). (d) In their external duties (*ver. 8*). There are two classes opposite to the Christian in this—the ignorant, who do little or nothing, and yet say they serve God as well as they can; and those who have the full form of godliness and rest in that. But as they are mere external duties they are abominable to God (*Isa. i. 11, &c.*; *Mark x. 20-21*). (e) In their external sufferings. The glorified put nothing down to their tribulation, but all to Christ's blood. "Therefore are they before the throne." 2. The saints have no confidence for the favour of God in internals. There is no exception but one (*Col. i. 27*). They have no confidence in internal—(1) dispositions (*Prov. xxviii. 26*). Many have a confidence in what they call their good hearts; but if God's testimony is to be believed, it is a false confidence (*Jer. xvii. 9*). (2) Exercises on their own spirits. (3) Attainments (*Gal. vi. 14*; *Phil. iii. 8*). (4) Graces. II. **IN POINT OF SANCTIFICATION.** As they have taken Him alone for justification, so for this (*1 Cor. i. 30*). The saints have no confidence for this. 1. In their stock of natural and acquired abilities (*2 Cor. iii. 51*), knowledge, utterance, good temper, &c. 2. In the means, such as the Word, sacraments, prayer, &c. Knowing that it is the Spirit that quickeneth (*John vi. 63*). 3. In their purposes and resolutions for holiness (*2 Tim. i. 12*). 4. In their vows and engagements to holiness (*Isa. xlv. 23-24*). 5. In their own endeavours after holiness (*Psa. cxxvii. 1*). 6. In the good frame and disposition of their hearts, *i.e.*, in actual grace, a most desirable thing, but no staff to lean upon (*1 Chron. xxix. 17-18*). 7. In habitual grace. Paul had a good stock of it, but he did not venture to live on it (*Gal. ii. 20*). Grace within the saints is a well whose springs are often dry; but the grace without them in Christ is an ever-flowing fountain (*John vi. 57*). (*T. Boston, D.D.*)

Vers. 4-10. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh.—Observe—I. **PAUL'S ADVANTAGES**—superior to those which men generally put confidence in—respecting his birth and religious training, his rigid profession and orthodoxy, his zeal and blameless conduct. II. **THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THEM AS A GROUND OF CONFIDENCE**—they could not confer peace, secure the favour of God—supersede the necessity of an inward change. III. **HIS RENUNCIATION OF THEM WAS NECESSARY, COMPLETE, WISE, AND INTELLIGENT.** (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The faith of St. Paul*.—St. Paul is here speaking of himself. Generally this is not wise, but circumstances may sometimes justify it. 1. The man who has been healed has a right to speak of the remedy, and ought to do so. St. Paul had been changed; the selfish man had become unselfish; the wild persecutor had been tamed. 2. The experience of St. Paul was very profitable. If you can do good by telling your experience, tell it. It is a delicate thing to speak of one's self; people who have little experience are often the greatest speakers; but there is a false delicacy which must be overcome. 3. Paul's purpose was also to glorify his Master. These verses resemble a tree with many branches, but they have but one root. The central thought is—I. **FAITH.**

1. It was of the right nature. There is a faith which never goes deeper than the intellect. It is like the smile of some people who do not know how to smile, and which only touches certain places on the face. There is another faith that breaks right through the soul, and moves the man to his very centre. Such was Paul's; it took possession of heart, soul, and mind. 2. It was a mighty faith. There is a faith right enough in its way, but very feeble. It resembles a man who is walking in a path about which he has some doubt. He looks to the right, to the left; behind and before; he proceeds slowly, hesitatingly, but he does proceed. But Paul received Christ with open arms, without caution or reserve. II. THE WORKING OF THIS FAITH and what it did in Paul. On faith taking possession of the heart two things are sure to follow. 1. Self-renunciation. If your faith has not made you cast anything away, you ought to look into it. Now Paul had three things of which he was very proud. (1) Jewish extraction. Men in all ages have been proud of their ancestors. The Jews had many things of which they could boast. They were the chosen people. They had Divine revelation. The worship of the true God was established among them. They had a great history. Angels walked their valleys; wondrous things were done on their mountain-tops. They have had greater influence over the world than any other nation. It is a great thing to belong to such a stock, and to belong to it was regarded as being safe for ever. St. Paul, however, cast it aside as loss for Christ. (2) Legal righteousness. Paul was a Pharisee, and as such—(a) He knew the laws of Moses well. He had a most correct creed. (b) He practised the religion of the Pharisees. There was a twofold righteousness; real as before God, love to God and man; apparent as before man, the observance of rites and public duties. Paul had little of the former; he had the latter to perfection, but he cast it out. (3) Religious zeal. Zeal is about the strongest word you can use to express a warm state of mind, and if there is anything of which a man is proud it is this. It is one of the noblest of virtues, but do not seek to display it as Jehu—it will come out of itself. Better do with your zeal what Paul did. "I count it loss for Christ; I will not hope for salvation from it." 2. Reception of Jesus Christ. Observe—(1) His estimate of the knowledge of Christ. There are three things in this which make all other knowledge dim, and all other possessions worthless; the Fatherhood of God, the mediation of Christ, and immortality with Christ in heaven. These destroy man's three great enemies. (a) The mediation of Christ—sin; (b) immortality—death; (c) the Fatherhood of God—fear. (2) He desired to be united to Christ. How can a person be united to another? You have friends in Australia, but you are as near them as ever, by confidence, sympathy, and the deepest feelings of your nature. To be united to Christ is for you to love Him, and for Him to send forth His sympathy towards you. In the one case you are "found in Him," in the other He is "in you." (3) He believed that there was an infinite fulness of blessing in Christ, and that by union with Christ this would become His. The soul that is united to Christ shall not want. (a) It shall have a full and free pardon. (b) It shall be justified before God through the sacrifice of Christ. (c) Be quickened with the life that is in Christ. (d) Have a true rightness which is produced by God in and on the soul, that will bear the test of judgment, and be beautiful in the light of heaven. (e) End its journey by sitting with Christ, and enjoying His glory. (*T. Jones, D.D.*) *Privileges no ground of trust*:—The list sounds much as if you or I were to say something of this kind: "I am of a good Presbyterian stock. One of my ancestors fought at Bothwell Bridge for 'Christ's crown and covenant,' and another died as a martyr in the same cause in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh. There have been several ministers in my line, and many elders. I was baptized in a Presbyterian church, attended the Sabbath school, and became a communicant when I was eighteen. I have always attended the church regularly, kept up family worship, and lived a decorous life. I am well read in sound theology; hold rigidly in my opinions by the Westminster Confession; and have now and again taken a part in controversies about election, or the extent of the atonement." This is all well, very well, so far as it goes. But if you or I be in any degree looking to these things—to any of them, or to all of them taken together—as a ground of hope for eternity, we are, in so far, occupying a religious position corresponding very exactly with that of Paul before his conversion to Christ. (*R. Johnstone, LL.D.*)

Vers. 7-9. What things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ.—*The Christian's accounts*:—The Christian keeps an accurate account book. He reckons up with an enlightened judgment his gains and losses. And most important is it

that he should : for the question of questions is, What is gain to me and what is loss ? I. THE ANSWER GIVEN BY THE WORLD. Examine the accounts of nine-tenths and you will find—1. Health and money entered as clear gains, comfort, ease, tranquillity, prosperity, carried to the side of profit. 2. Sickness, disappointment, contraction of the means of pleasure, decay of trade, sorrow, bereavement, entered as unmixed loss. 3. And when we come to matters bearing on the interest of the soul we find that the natural heart has entered on the side of eternal gain, good character, punctuality of attendance at Christian ordinances, a conscience silent as to definite injuries against neighbours. And gain it is in a sense, for it is better to have a good conscience than a bad one, to be moral than immoral. St. Paul says no word about morality being a loss, or that he would have valued Christ more had he been a greater sinner. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S ANSWER. For Christ's sake Paul now accounts as loss all that he had once accounted gain. He was an Israelite of direct descent. Would he have been a better man had he been born a Gentile and an idolater ? He had been blameless in his observance of the ceremonial, and, as he understood it, of the moral law—does he regret that he had not habitually broken it ? None of these things. The loss was that he had trusted in these things, and looked to them for salvation. He thought that God must be satisfied with so unexceptionable a genealogy, so diligent a worshipper. 2. In this point of view many of us need instruction and warning. What are we trusting in ? (1) Some of us are putting off the question altogether and saying, "I will live while I can and die when I must ; I will not torment myself before the time—many years hence I hope." (2) But this childish and suicidal infatuation is not in all of us. There are those who have religion. What is it ? Is it more than a moral life, a Sunday worship, a trusting in God's mercy ? But where is Christ in all this ? What know you of the thought, "What things were gain to me," &c. ? What of your own are you discarding in order to rest in Christ alone ? Where are your transfers from one side of your reckoning to the other because of Christ ? And many of us die in the strength of a gospel which has no Christ in it ; no demolition of self, either of self-confidence or seeking, and no exaltation of Christ on the ruins of self, either as Saviour or Lord. We are at best what St. Paul was before his conversion—alas, without his good conscience or scrupulous obedience. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *A business-like account* :—Our Saviour's advice to those who wished to be His servants was to count the cost. He did not wish to enlist any one by keeping him in ignorance of the requirements of His service. The exercise of our judgments in the gospel is required. Do not imagine that religion consists in wild fanaticism which never considers. The apostle here gives us the word "count" three times over. He was skilled in spiritual arithmetic and very careful in his reckoning. He seems here to be in a mercantile frame of mind, adding and subtracting and balancing.

I. THE APOSTLE'S CALCULATIONS. 1. His counting at the outset of his Christian life—"What things were gain," &c. (1) He dwelt on the several items, noting each with great distinctness. The list reads like a catalogue. His Jewish advantages had been as precious pearls to him once. (2) What is there *per contra*. Nothing on the other side but one item ; but that one outweighed the many. That one was not Christianity, the Church, or the orthodox faith, but Christ. (3) Not only after putting the one under the other and making a subtraction did he find that his earthly advantages were less than Christ ; he found these gains transformed into a loss. There was not a plus on that side to stand in proportion to a plus on this ; they were turned into a minus of actual deficit. Not that he meant that to be a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," &c., was in itself a loss—the advantage was "much every way ;" but he meant that with respect to Christ those things became a disadvantage, because their tendency had been to keep him from trusting Christ. It is a grand thing to have led a virtuous life ; but this blessing may, by our own folly, become a curse, if we place it in opposition to the righteousness of Christ, and dream that we have no need of a Saviour. 2. His estimate for the time then present. We are always anxious to hear what a man has to say about a thing after he has tried it. After twenty years of experience Paul had an opportunity of revising his balance sheet ; and makes the strong affirmation—"Yea, doubtless I count," &c. He has made the original summary even more comprehensive, but he stands to the same estimate and uses not barely the word "Christ," but the fuller expression, "the excellency of the knowledge," &c. Now he has come to know the Christ in whom before he had trusted. Christ is better loved as he is better known. (1) The words show the points upon which he had fullest knowledge. He knew the Lord as—(a) Christ, the Messiah anointed and sent of the Father. (b) Jesus, the

anointed and actual Saviour. (c) My Lord. His was an appropriating knowledge. (2) The text implies that he knew Christ by faith. He believed, and hence he knew. (3) He knew Him by experience, "and the power of His resurrection." This is excellent knowledge when the power of a fact is realized within and shown in the life. (4) More than that Paul aimed to know more by a growing likeness to Him. (5) There is no knowledge in this world comparable to this, for it concerns the highest conceivable object, and no man hath it but by the Holy Ghost. (6) If you would see its excellency look at its effects—it makes us humble, delivers us from the power of sin, elevates the motives, sweetens the feelings, gives nobility to the life, and will continue to progress when every other knowledge is laid aside. 3. His third counting may be regarded as his life estimate. "For whom I have," &c. Here his estimate sets out with actual test and practical proof. He is a prisoner, with nothing in the world; he has lost caste, has no longer his own righteousness: Christ is his all and nothing else. Does he regret the loss of all things? No, he counts it an actual deliverance to have lost them. (1) In his first and second countings these things were "loss," now they are "dung." (2) In his second estimate he spoke of "knowing" Christ, but now he speaks of "winning" Him, or rather "gaining," for he keeps to the mercantile figure all through. (3) Further, his aim is to be "found in Him," as a bird in the air, a fish in the sea, a member in the body—as a fugitive shelters himself in his hiding-place, so in Christ as never to come out of Him, so that whenever any one looks for him he may find him in Jesus. (4) Notice how Paul keeps to what he began with, viz., his unrobing himself of his boastings in the flesh, and his arraying himself with Christ—"not having mine own righteousness," &c. II. OUR OWN CALCULATIONS. 1. Do we join in Paul's earlier estimate. You will never be saved till you lose all your legal hopes. 2. After many years of profession do you still continue in the same mind and make the same estimate? Not if you have settled down on something other than Christ. 3. You cannot join Paul in the last calculation—"I have suffered the loss of all things," but do you think you could have done so if required for Christ's sake? Your forefathers did so. 4. Seeing God has left you your worldly comforts have you used all things for His sake. 5. If Christ be to you so that all things are dung and dross in comparison, do you not want Him for your children, your friends, &c. What a man values for himself he values for others. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Christ is true gain*:—Earthly good—I. BRINGS NO PEACE, Christ does. II. CAN GIVE NO SATISFACTION, Christ can. III. LOSES ITS POWER TO GRATIFY, Christ never. IV. IS ATTENDED WITH CARE AND TROUBLE. Christ is full of consolation. V. AT BEST OF THE EARTH EARTHLY. Christ opens heaven. VI. HAS ITS LIMIT. In Christ all fulness dwells. VII. MUST HAVE ITS PERIOD. Christ lives for ever. (J. Lyth, D.D.) *Life for Christ*:—The life which we owe to Christ and hold in Christ we are bound by the strongest claims to use for Christ. Life is a thing to be used. And if you admit that it was once forfeited, but that Christ has bought it back for you by His death, and that you keep it only by your connection with Him, then you hold it on false pretences if you use it in any other way but for Him. There are two ways in which "life for Christ" may be understood. (1) In order to obtain Him—"that I may win Christ," i.e., finally enjoy Him; or (2) as the Master puts it, "for My sake." We take it in the latter sense. A man may live a very good life—he may have a natural tendency towards it, or a conscientious feeling may lead him to it; but all the while he may fall short of this—that it is not for Christ. The motive is diluted by worldly motives and is very feeble, while God measures everything by the loving standard of the one motive—was it for Christ? This life for Christ—I. MUST NOT BE AN UNCERTAIN THING. Taken up and laid down at pleasure, by fits and starts, remembered and forgotten, but must be the result of deep conviction. To this end—1. Consecrate your life to Christ in the most express and solemn way you can, on your knees. Lay the sacrifice upon the altar. Invest it with the sacredness of an irrevocable pledge. 2. Renew that act of self-dedication at not very long intervals. 3. Write it on everything you have and are, body, soul, time, talents, business, family, &c. II. MUST ENTER INTO YOUR TRIALS. When you are in bodily or mental distress, and when you are going through the discipline of bitter daily friction, think thus—"I will sanctify and ennoble this suffering by bearing it for Christ." He bore much more for me, and these are the "marks of the Lord Jesus" now laid upon me. III. MUST ENTER INTO YOUR HAPPINESS. Christ is happy in your happiness and for His sake you must be happy: and your happiness must not fail to make others happy. IV. MUST BE A LIFE OF MINISTRY. 1. In defence of Christ. 2. In the extension of His cause. 3. In having some positive work to

do for Him. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The importance of spiritual accounts:*—Turning to the mercantile figure we are reminded of the paramount importance of having the record-books of our inner life rightly kept. The great German satirist, Heinrich Heine, has scornfully depicted the mere worldling thus: "Business men have the same religion throughout the whole world. They find in their office their church, in their desk their prayer-cushion, in their ledger their Bible. The warehouse is their inner sanctuary; the exchange bell is their summons to prayer; their God is their gold; their faith is their credit." The apostle was never so low in the scale as these words represent justly the mere worldling to be. He was, even as Saul the persecutor, of a very different and a far higher type. None the less these scathing words describe too closely the character and conduct of countless thousands, who all the time are not ashamed and not afraid to bear the name of Christian. But in contrast to such a picture we have the new man, renewed in heart and life; he, too, has his all-engrossing concerns. He, too, has his books, recording the transactions which take place in his inmost soul. He keeps them rightly. No false entries are seen there. The things of the world, whatever their value in themselves may be, are, as related to the soul's interests, entered as loss. The things of the kingdom alone appear as gain. True wealth—that which alone can claim the name of substance—is summed up in righteousness; life in Christ Jesus—life which in Him is everlasting. (*J. Hutchison, D.D.*) *The gain of loss:*—He who loses anything and gets wisdom by it is a gainer by the loss. (*L'Estrange.*) *Loss for gain:*—When the captain leaves the harbour he has a cargo on board of which he takes great care, but when a tremendous wind is blowing and the ship labours, being too heavily laden, and there is great fear that she will not outride the storm, see how eagerly the sailors lighten the ship. They bring up from the hold with all diligence the very things which before they prized, and they seem rejoiced to leave them into the sea. Never men more eager to get than these are to throw away. There go the casks of flour, the bars of iron, the manufactured goods: overboard go valuable bales of merchandise; nothing seems to be worth keeping. How is this? Are not these things good? Yes, but not good to a sinking ship. Anything must go to save life, anything to outride the storm. And so the apostle says that in order to win Christ and to be found in Him he flung the whole cargo of his beloved confidences over, and was as glad to get rid of them as if they were only dung. This he did to win Christ, and that fact suggests another picture: an English war ship of the olden times is cruising the ocean, and she spies a Spanish galleon in the distance laden with gold from the Indies. Captain and men are determined to overtake and capture her, for they have a relish for prize-money; but their vessel sails heavily. What then? If she will not move because of her load they fling into the sea everything they can lay their hands on, knowing that if they can capture the Spanish vessel the booty will make amends for all they lose and vastly more. Do you wonder at their eagerness to lose the little to gain the great? Sailor, why cast overboard those useful things? "Oh," says he, "they are nothing compared with that prize over yonder. If we can but get side by side and board her we will soon make up for all that we now throw into the sea." And so it is with the man who is in earnest to win Christ and to be found in Him. Overboard go circumcision and Phariseism, and the blamelessness touching the law, and all that, for he knows that he will find a better righteousness in Christ than any which he foregoes, yea, find everything in Christ which he now, for his Lord's sake, counts but as the slag of the furnace. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Self-renunciation for Christ not to be regretted:*—The poet George Herbert was so highly connected, and in such favour at court, that at one time a secretaryship of state seemed to him not unattainable. But he gave up all such prospects for the work of a humble clergyman, and in looking back upon the time he made his choice, he could say, "I think myself more happy than if I had attained what then I had so ambitiously thirsted for. And I can now behold the court with an impartial eye, and see plainly that it is made up of frauds and bitters, and flattery, and many other such empty imaginary and painted pleasures—pleasures which are so empty as not to satisfy when they are enjoyed. But in God and His service is a fulness of all joy and pleasure and no satiety." (*J. F. B. Tinling.*) Raymond Lully, or Lullius, to whom the Arabic professorship at Oxford owes its origin, was the first Christian missionary labour to the Moslems. When shipwrecked near Pisa, after many years of missionary labour, though upwards of seventy, his ardour was unabated. "Once," he wrote, "I was fairly rich; once I had a wife and children; once I tasted freely of the pleasures of this life. But all these things I gladly resigned that I might spread

abroad a knowledge of the truth. I studied Arabic, and several times went forth to preach the gospel to the Saracens. I have been in prison, I have been scourged, for years I have striven to persuade the princes of Christendom to befriend the common cause of converting the Mohammedans. Now, though old and poor, I do not despair; I am ready, if it be God's will, to persevere unto death." And he did so, being stoned to death at Bergia, in Africa, in 1314, after gathering a little flock of converts. (*Sunday at Home.*) *Worldly honour consecrated to Christ*:—T. A. Ragland, an eminent mathematician, and a devoted Christian, gained the silver cup at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, four years in succession. One of these was dedicated to God for the communion service of a small native Church, mainly gathered by him in Southern India, and all were set apart for the same purpose in connection with his itinerating missionary service. (*J. F. B. Tinsling.*) *Diverse estimates of Paul's sacrifices*:—Porphyry, the philosopher, said that it was a pity that such a man as Paul was thrown away upon our religion. And the monarch of Morocco told the English ambassador in King John's time that he had lately read Paul's Epistles, which he liked so well that were he now to choose his religion, he would before any other embrace Christianity. "But every one ought," said he, "to die in his own religion"; and the leaving of the faith in which he was born was the only thing he disliked in that apostle. (*J. Trapp.*)

Ver. 8. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.—These words are added by way of amplification. 1. To show his perseverance in the contempt of all outward advantages. "I have counted," and "do still count." He had not repented of his choice. 2. To comprehend all other things besides Jewish privileges. A Christian can deny anything for Christ's sake. 3. To show the reality of his assertion—"Yea, doubtless." It was not pretension, or naked approbation, or speculation, but practical esteem. (1) This contempt is set forth (a) in its vehemence and greatness, "loss," "dung;" (b) in its reality and sincerity. Men approve things that are excellent (Rom. ii. 18), yet have no mind to embrace them, because they cannot deny temptations—but St. Paul says, "I have suffered," &c. (2) The causes of this contempt were—(a) The excellency of Christ's knowledge. (b) To gain Christ. Let us now consider—I. PAUL'S SELF-DENIAL. 1. The universality of its extent—"All things." This is to be observed—(1) Partly because some can deny a few things for Christ, but not all. But if we keep back anything the price is too short (Mark x. 21). If a woman love but one man more than her husband, though she love him better than millions, it is a breach of the marriage covenant. When men come into possession of a house all persons must be outed, or possession is not valid; you must deliver up all to Christ, or He will accept of none. (2) Partly to show that not only things unlawful must be denied, but even things lawful must be rejected or disesteemed for His sake. (a) That our sins must be renounced is out of question (Eph. iv. 22). These were never worth keeping. It is no strange notion of the physician if he require the patient to part with the disease, or he who gives us new apparel to bid us part with our rags. (b) Lawful things when they come into competition with Christ, such as the comfort of our relations, honour, natural supports, and even life (Luke xiv. 26). 2. The degree—with loathing and indignation. Whilst we stand peddling and hanker after these things, the temptation is not fully off; but we are like crows, though driven from carrion, keep within scent of it. 3. Here is his resolution actually verified. He had "suffered the loss of all things." We have not realized this, not being called upon, but the same spirit must be in us. All things that draw us off from Christ must be actually contemned. II. THE REASONS WHY IT BINDS ALL CHRISTIANS. 1. This is plainly inferred out of—(1) The faith of the gospel. (a) As that faith is sound belief of the veracity of God we are pledged to crucify the flesh, and wait with confidence on God in the midst of afflictions. (b) As it is acceptance of good so we refuse worldly things as our felicity and portion. (2) The love of the gospel; for we are to love Christ superlatively (Psa. lxxiii. 25; Matt. vi. 24); therefore (Matt. x. 37). (3) The hope of the gospel which is everlasting life (Rom. viii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 17; Mark x. 29–30). (4) The obedience of the gospel (Matt. xvi. 24). 2. Because Christ hath deserved this esteem. (1) By what He is to us. (a) More excellent than all things else. The world's good is uncertain and empty. (b) More necessary—we can dispense with everything else. (c) More beneficial; in Him alone is salvation and happiness to be found. (2) By what He hath done for us (2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 7; 2 Cor. v. 21). 3. This esteem will show itself. (1) In

labouring to get Christ above all, and with the hazard of all (Matt. vi. 33; xiii. 45-46). (2) In a care to keep Christ above all. He is your life (Gal. ii. 20), your strength (1 John iv. 4), your blessedness (Col. i. 27). (3) In grief for losing Christ above all (Matt. ix. 15; Psa. li. 10-12). (4) By delighting in Him, and in the testimonies of His love above all (1 Pet. i. 8). (5) By loving all other things for Christ's sake. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The knowledge of Christ*:—1. The analysis of our faculties into—thought, feeling, and volition, may be important to the understanding and classification of the phenomena of our nature; but these faculties are neither independent nor distinct. The exercise of one includes that of the other. There is always an exercise of will in thought, of feeling in cognition. In the Scriptures knowledge is not mere intellectual apprehension; it includes the proper apprehension not only of the object, but of its qualities; and if those qualities be æsthetic or moral, it includes the due apprehension of them, and the state of feelings which answers to them. 2. The knowledge of Christ, therefore, is not the apprehension of what He is, simply by the intellect, but also a due apprehension of His glory, and involves not as a consequence merely, but as one of its elements, the corresponding feeling of adoration, delight, desire, and complacency. This knowledge—**I. INCLUDES**—1. A knowledge of Christ's person as God and man. 2. The knowledge of this work in the redemption of man. 3. Of His relation to us, and of the benefits we derive from Him, justification, adoption, sanctification, eternal life. **II. IS SUPERLATIVELY EXCELLENT**: because—1. He is Himself the perfect object of knowledge. 2. Because eternal life, the hope of the soul, consists in that knowledge. The possession of it enlightens and enlarges the intellect, purifies the heart, and renders perfectly blessed. 3. Without this knowledge we are not only ignorant of God, but of the way of salvation. We know not how to be justified or sanctified. We of necessity, therefore, are left to seek and trust in other ineffectual methods of obtaining these blessings. Conclusion: 1. All religion is included in this—to know Christ. To this we should concentrate all our attention and efforts. It is vain to seek the knowledge of God or His favour, to strive after holiness and peace in any other way. 2. The only test of Christian character is found here. Men may be benevolent, in a certain sense pious, but they cannot be Christians unless they know Christ, and find in that their spiritual life. 3. The only way to save men is not by preaching the doctrines of natural religion, nor by holding up the law, nor by expounding the anthropological doctrines of the Bible. These things are important in their place, but they are subordinate to preaching Christ, *i.e.*, holding Him up in His person, His work, &c., as the great object of knowledge, and, as such, the great object of love, the only ground of confidence, and our only and all-sufficient portion. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The knowledge of Christ*:—**I. ITS NATURE**. 1. Speculative. 2. Experimental. 3. Practical. **II. ITS EXCELLENCY** in—1. Itself. 2. Its use. 3. Its effect. **III. ITS VALUE**. Incomparable; all else but dung and dross. **IV. ITS POWER**. 1. To sway the judgment. 2. Induce sacrifice. 3. Excite effort. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) The more we know of some things, the less we admire them; a minute inspection reveals deficiencies; but the reverse is true about Jesus Christ. So St. Paul felt, and so feels every genuine Christian. **I. THE VALUE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS**. This knowledge—1. Contains all that can satisfy the understanding. If we derive pleasure from the knowledge of art, science, literature, history, how much more may we derive from the discoveries of Divine truth? This leaves all the discoveries of scholars at an immense distance. If men were to propound to the wisest, "How shall man be just with God?" it would baffle them. But the knowledge of Christ solves this. The truths of the incarnation, death, &c., of Christ, while the profoundest are yet the most simple. To regard this knowledge, therefore, with indifference is a mark of a weak mind. And, besides, it is the constant study of the angels of heaven who behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2. Pacifies the conscience. Some men would give all the world for a peaceful conscience. Think of what they do to procure it—amusement, repentance, business, &c., alas, are only opiates. But let a man be alive to the discoveries of the gospel, see justice satisfied in the death of Christ, and know that God is reconciled through His Son, and the storm will be stilled. 3. Purifies the heart. In all the lessons of human wisdom there are two incurable defects. (1) They are often only conjectures. (2) They propose no motives of sufficient weight. Now this knowledge has been tried, and has been found to be saving, and no imaginable motives could be stronger than "for the sake of Christ," and "to win Christ." 4. Saves the soul. "This is life

eternal," &c. II. THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S REGARD FOR THAT KNOWLEDGE. 1. It is personal—"I count." The error of the Jews was that they substituted relative for personal piety. They gloried in their relation to Abraham, &c. So now a great many depend upon the merits of others. The religion of some is hereditary, or by proxy. But neither the devil nor Christ will be served in this way. 2. Decided and unequivocal. "Yea, doubtless." The Christianity of many is very vacillating; but this Christ rejects, and even man contemns. 3. Rational—"I count." Men sometimes set up a blazing profession because their feelings have been wrought upon, and without any idea of what the profession involves. But the cost ought to be counted, and must be if there is to be any stability. 4. Supreme—"All things." (1) We are to count all things sinful as loss for this knowledge. (2) Things that are lawful. All that is valued on earth must be subordinated to this. (*W. Henry.*) *The excellency of the knowledge of Christ appears*—I. IN THE SACRIFICES THE APOSTLE MADE TO SECURE IT. II. IN THE BENEFITS IT SECURES. 1. Righteousness. 2. Resurrection power. 3. A glorious hope. III. IN THE DISPOSITION IT CREATES. 1. A correct estimate of ourselves. 2. Earnest purpose. 3. Persevering effort. 4. Love and unity. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) I. THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IS SO EXCELLENT, THAT A GRACIOUS HEART COUNTETH ALL THINGS DUNG AND DROSS RATHER THAN MISS IT. 1. The knowledge here spoken of. Knowledge is twofold. (1) A bare speculative knowledge. Even this is a great privilege (1 Pet. i. 12; Eph. iii. 10); but if we are content with it we shall perish. It was not those who saw the ark, but those who entered it who were saved. (2) A saving knowledge such as is accompanied by—(a) Faith, i.e., a certain persuasion of the truth of our redemption by Christ upon evidence so as we may venture our souls and all our interest in His hands (John vi. 69; Acts ii. 36; John xvii. 8). (b) Love. (c) Obedience (1 John ii. 4). 2. Why is this knowledge so prized? (1) It is valuable in itself; better than all other. (a) From the Author (Matt. xvi. 16; John vi. 45; 1 John ii. 20). (b) The matter to be known, Christ the Saviour of the world. This is comfortable knowledge if we consider our deep necessity (Col. i. 21; Job xiv. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 26; 1 Thess. i. 10), and His sufficiency to do us good (Acts xx. 28; Col. i. 20, 27). (c) The effect. It is a renewing and transforming knowledge (Col. iii. 10; 1 John ii. 2). (2) The subjects who thus esteem Christ. (a) Their minds are changed (Jer. xxxi. 34). By this they have a spirit of discerning. (b) Their hearts (2 Cor. v. 9–10). 3. Uses. (1) Of reproof. (a) To those who study all things but Christ. If God hath laid out the riches of His grace and wisdom to do us good, surely it deserveth our best thoughts. (b) To those who content themselves with the form of knowledge (Rom. ii. 20). Christianity is not only to be believed, but felt (1 Pet. ii. 3). Experience is the best seal and confirmation (2 Pet. i. 8). (2) Of exhortation. Consider—(a) The necessity. You must know Christ before you can believe and love Him (2 Tim. i. 12). (b) The pleasantness. (c) The profit (John xvii. 3). (3) Bless God that He hath given thee this knowledge, and do not murmur if He hath denied thee other things. Remember (a) how it excelleth all other gifts. (b) How a true value and esteem of Christ lesseneth all other things. II. JESUS CHRIST MUST BE KNOWN AS LORD. 1. What this Lordship of Christ is—the new light of propriety and government over all men which Christ now hath as being the Sovereign of the world. (1) It is superadded to the former sovereignty and dominion which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost had as Creator (Rev. v. 12). 2. It is derivative, and cannot be supreme, but subordinate (Matt. xxviii. 18; John xvii. 2; Phil. ii. 11). (3) It is beneficial to us. Its end is to effect man's recovery to peace with and loyalty to God. 2. How this right accrue to Christ. (1) By purchase (Rom. xiv. 9). (2) By grant (Acts ii. 26). 3. How we come to be concerned in it. (1) By our passive subjection, and (2) voluntary submission (2 Cor. viii. 5). 4. What our concern is. (1) Our privileges and immunities. (a) Freedom from the curse and rigour of the law (Gal. v. 18); (b) from the guilt of sin (Col. i. 13–14); (c) the wrath to come (1 Thess. i. 10); and deliverance to grace and glory. (2) Our duties (Heb. v. 9). Privilege and duty must not be separated (Luke vi. 46; Matt. vii. 21). 5. Use, to persuade us to own Christ as a Lord. (1) Let us enter into the state of servants and vassals to Him by renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, who were once our lords, but were, indeed, our enemies (Isa. xxvi. 13). (2) Be not subjects in name and by profession only (Col. i. 10). III. THERE SHOULD BE SOME APPLICATION WHEN WE CONSIDER CHRIST AND ADDRESS OURSELVES TO KNOW HIM. 1. What is this application? (1) Some distinctions. (a) The application of comfort is when I respect Christ under such a term as implies some privilege to me, that He is my

Saviour, &c. (Gal. ii. 20); but the application that respects duty is when I apprehend Him under a term which inferreth my obligation to obedience—"my Lord."

(b) The application of faith is a particular application of Christ and the promise to ourselves, so as to excite us to look after the benefits for which Christ is appointed: the application of assurance is when I actually determine that my own sins are pardoned and I adopted into God's family (1 John iii. 19).

(c) The application may be implicit, dark, and reserved, when we have not so full a persuasion of our good estate, but comfortable encouragement to wait upon God in the way of duty; it may also be explicit, clear, and open (Eph. i. 6; 2 Cor. v. 1; 2 Tim. v. 8).

(2) Some observations. (a) The application of faith may be without the application of assurance; sometimes they go together. (b) The one is necessary, the other comfortable. (c) It is a support to have the darker way of applying Christ and His benefits, when we have not the full certainty that they belong to us.

2. Why there should be such an application of Christ. (1) Because things that nearly concern us do most affect us. The love of God in general doth not so affect me as when I know "He loved me and gave Himself for me." (2) Without some application there can be no interest and benefit to us. General grace must be made particular. Christ's blood will not avail unless it be sprinkled. (3) The Scripture insisteth much on a personal entering into covenant with God (2 Chron. xxx. 8). (4) Our personal interest in Christ is the ground of our comfort and confidence (Hab. iii. 18; Luke i. 17).

Application: 1. Resolve to give yourself up to Him to serve Him. A believer cannot always say, "Christ is mine"; but he can say "I am His" (Psa. cxix. 94). 2. In applying Christ seek necessary grace rather than comfort. 3. When God draweth—run (Cant. i. 4). When He knocketh, open (Rev. iii. 10). (T. Manton, D.D.)

The excellency of the knowledge of Christ:—Its notes are—

I. CERTAINTY. Concerning moral and religious truth men have been most uncertain, and have bewildered themselves in endless speculations. And yet, on such subjects, certainty is of the utmost importance. The knowledge of Christ is certain. What God teaches must be absolute truth. He can neither deceive, nor be deceived. That Christianity is a system of Divine knowledge from God is proved.—1. By prophecy. 2. Miracles. 3. Experience (John vii. 17).

II. MAJESTY AND GRANDEUR. Great thoughts in religion are necessary for man; and true religion must in its own nature have them. It is one of the characteristics of false religion to inculcate low thoughts of God and Divine things. Take the Christian conception of God—eternal, just, merciful, redeeming.

III. SUITABLENESS AND ADAPTATION. It is in all its parts knowledge for us. No kind of useful knowledge is to be undervalued. Many branches are of great importance. But all such is—

1. Partial. A king may be a criminal before God. 2. Temporary. But look at the knowledge of Christ. (1) It is salvation for sinners. (2) Communion with God for them who have been afar off. (3) Comfort in affliction. (4) Life in death, and all this for us, not for devils or angels.

IV. COMPREHENSIVENESS. It is not only light itself, it gives light to everything beside, not a star, but a sun. He who knows Christ knows—

1. Creation (Col. i. 16). 2. History. Human writers narrate the events, in Christ their purpose is discovered. The call of Abraham, &c., all stand connected with the designs of providence in regard to the spiritual interests of mankind. The Roman Empire was designed to be the wide field for the triumphs of Christ. The voyage of Columbus was intended to bring America into the Christian fold. 3. Daily providence. 4. The sepulchre. V. HOLINESS. Human knowledge does not sanctify, it often pollutes, and there is also a knowledge of Christ which leaves us in sin and under condemnation. But this knowledge leads to holiness.

Conclusion: 1. Would you possess this knowledge? You must count all this but loss for it. 2. If this knowledge is incalculably excellent, then it is our duty to diffuse it. (R. Watson.)

The excellency of the knowledge of Christ:—

I. IT SURPASSES all other. II. IS ONLY COMMUNICATED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. III. EXALTS THE NATURE OF MAN. IV. BRINGS PEACE, HOLINESS, SALVATION. V. IS PERMANENTLY VALUABLE. VI. IS WORTH ANY SACRIFICE. VII. SECURES ETERNAL GAIN. (J. Lyth, D.D.)

I. WHAT THIS KNOWLEDGE IS. 1. Comparatively—(1) It stands opposed to the ignorance of the heathen (1 Cor. i. 21; Rom. i. 21; Acts xvii. 23). (2) It is distinguished from the knowledge of the law of Moses (John i. 17; Heb. x. 1). (3) It is superior to the speculative unsanctified notions of nominal Christians (Tit. i. 16; 2 Tim. iii. 5, ii. 19; Luke xiii. 27). 2. Positively. It is—(1) Spiritual (Eph. i. 17; John vi. 63). (2) Supernatural (1 Cor. ii. 14); the sole prerogative of the supernaturally renewed man. (3) Experimental (2 Thess. ii. 10; 1 Pet. ii. 2-3). (4) Practical. It is sometimes put for the whole of religion (1 John ii. 3-4). 3. Specifically. It is

the knowledge of Christ. (1) Christ Himself is the object of it. (2) His character, also, and office and work (1 Cor. ii. 2; John i. 14). (3) Faith is included (Isa. liii. 11; Psa. ix. 10). II. ITS EXCELLENCY. 1. It is most necessary. Of many things we may be ignorant, because we cannot attain the knowledge of them; and of many others we may safely be ignorant; but this knowledge is necessary to salvation (Prov. xix. 2). There can be no faith in or love to Jesus without it. Satan takes the greatest pains to prevent its attainment, and God to communicate it (1 Tim. ii. 4). 2. Most heavenly. Every good gift comes from God, but this especially (2 Cor. iv. 6; Isa. liv. 13). 3. Most useful. 4. Every kind of knowledge is useful in its place; for it is to the mind what light is to the eyes; but this exceeds all other. (1) It converts the soul (Acts xxvi. 18); (2) regenerates (Col. iii. 10); (3) humbles; other puffs up (Isa. vi. 5; Job xl. 4; Rev. i. 17); (4) encourages (Psa. ix. 10; Eph. i. 13; 2 Tim. i. 12). 4. Is most pleasant. Knowledge in general is grateful to the mind, yet some kinds are painful (Eccl. i. 18). There must be a good deal of pains to get it, a good deal of care to keep it; the more we know the more it seems to us remains to be known, and the folly and misery of man the more apparent. But this knowledge is easily attained, and he who increaseth it increaseth joy (Psa. cxix. 72, 162; Jer. xv. 16). Conclusion: Is this knowledge so excellent, then? 1. Do we possess it? (1. Cor. xv. 34; John iii. 19). If not, seek it at once (James i. 5; Prov. ii. 3-7). 2. If so, be thankful (Matt. xiii. 16; Luke x. 21; Jer. ix. 23-24). 3. But do not be proud. The wisest know but little of what is to be known (Hosea vi. 3; 2 Pet. iii. 18). (*G. Burder.*) *The excellency of the knowledge of Christ:*—If the soul be without knowledge it is not good. This is true in regard to worldly knowledge; much more to heavenly. I. ITS OBJECT—Christ Jesus. It—I. Comprehends adoring views of the Divinity of His Person. Do away with these, and scriptural revelation becomes chaos. 2. Involves intelligent apprehensions of the mediatorial and vicarious character of His work (Rom. iii. 25). 3. Includes a believing and experimental acquaintance with the way in which sinners become interested in the blessings of redemption by being reconciled to God through faith in Christ. 4. Implies an obedient regard and solemn recognition of the high authority of Christ as King and Lawgiver. II. ITS NATURE. 1. It is not visual and corporeal, but intellectual and theoretical. The former was the case in the days of our Saviour's flesh, and yet to many it was of no avail. While something more than head knowledge is required, yet that is essential. Ignorance is not the mother of devotion. 2. Experimental and appropriating; this is unintelligible to carnal men. Who can make a blind man understand colours, or a deaf man sounds. Sin has got into the heart, Christ also must get there. 3. Practical and constraining. Mere uninfluential knowledge of Christ will only aggravate the sinner's doom. Hell is full of it. Does your knowledge, then, lead you to love good works, to hate sin, to be humble and obedient? III. ITS EXCELLENCY. 1. It is the essence of all gospel truth. 2. By it alone we obtain a comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the Divine character. "The world by wisdom knew not God," but he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father. 3. It may be seen in the excellency of those who have made and still make it their chief study. Angels, Prophets, Apostles, and the greatest of uninspired geniuses—Bacon, Newton, Milton, Locke. 4. In the excellent effects it produces on individual character. There is no necessary connection between science and sanctity, but that between the knowledge of Christ and purity and charity is inevitable. 5. In its improving influence on society at large. Compare heathen nations with Christian. 6. The possession of it stands in inseparable connection with the salvation of the soul. What is civilization compared with this? 7. It shall outlive and eclipse all other knowledge. (*Josiah Redford.*) *The excellency of this knowledge arises from the fact—*I. THAT IN CHRIST ALL DIVINE AND HUMAN EXCELLENCIES ARE COMBINED. Whatever beauty resides in the Divine attributes, for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and whatever perfection of human virtues, because He was "holy, harmless, undefiled," &c. II. THAT IT HAS A TRANSFORMING AND ASSIMILATING EFFECT ON ALL WHO BELIEVINGLY CONTEMPLATE IT. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love," &c. "Beholding His glory, we are transformed," &c. III. IT IS INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH OUR JUSTIFICATION. As faith is belief of the truth, this knowledge includes it. IV. ITS TENDENCY IS TO GENERATE LIVELY HOPE, AND FILL THE SOUL WITH PEACE AND JOY. V. IT FITS THE SOUL FOR HEAVEN. "This is life eternal," &c. VI. IT WILL BE FOR EVER INCREASING. However high the saints may rise, still Christ will be the inexhaustible source of their increase of knowledge. Conclusion: If the knowledge of Christ be so excellent—1. It should be our constant and vigorous effort to increase

in it daily. 2. We should endeavour to extend it to as many of our fellow creatures as we can reach. (*A. Alexander, D.D.*) I. WHAT KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IS THAT WHICH IS SO EXCELLENT? It is—1. Extensive. Apprehending Him as—(1) Christ, *i.e.*, His nature and offices—the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King. (2) Jesus, *i.e.*, His intention and execution of those offices—*viz.*, salvation. (3) Lord, *i.e.*, the consequents of those offices—dominion in Christ, subjection in us (Rom. xiv. 9). Many will take Christ as Saviour who will not own Him as Lord, but this is to apprehend Christ without His crown, and so not an excellent knowledge. 2. Appropriating. The marrow of the gospel lies in the pronouns “my” and “ours.” To apprehend Christ yours on good grounds is the excellency of this knowledge. 3. Effectual. It has a powerful efficacy on the heart and life. (1) On the judgment; when this knowledge in Christ is exalted as the chiefest among ten thousand, and the richest treasure esteemed dross in comparison with His riches. (2) On the affections. To kindle desire and raise joy in Christ. (3) On the practice. The profits of sin and its pleasures are renounced as well as self-righteousness. 4. Fiducial. It brings the soul to rest in Christ and His righteousness alone for pardon and acceptance, and to cast away all those rotten proofs of good-nature, harmlessness, accomplishments, &c. 6. Useful. He that has it studies to improve Christ, and to use Him for those blessed purposes for which He is given (vers. 9–10). II. WHY THIS KNOWLEDGE IS EXCELLENT. Because—1. It is that knowledge which the most excellent creatures on earth and the most exalted in heaven desired, obtained, and gloried in. Abraham (John viii. 56); Moses (Heb. xi. 26); the Prophets (1 Peter i. 10–11); and Kings (Luke x. 23–24); Paul (1 Cor. ii. 1–2); angels (1 Peter i. 12; Exodus xxxvii. 9). 2. In knowing Christ we know the glorious excellencies of God (John xiv. 7; Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 6). 3. It makes those who have it excellent (2 Cor. iii. 16, 18; 1 John iii. 2; Philip. iii. 21). Note the degrees by which fallen man is raised by this knowledge. (1) The removal of that which makes him vile (2 Peter ii. 20). (2) Partaking of the Divine nature, *i.e.*, of His holiness, the image of God (Col. iii. 10). All things pertaining to life and godliness are given through this knowledge (2 Peter i. 3–4). (3) Investing us with the righteousness of Christ (Isa. liii. 11). (4) Eternal glory (John xvii. 3). III. CHRIST HIMSELF IS MOST EXCELLENT, THEREFORE THIS KNOWLEDGE IS EXCELLENT KNOWLEDGE. 1. There is nothing in Him but is excellent. There is a mixture in all created beings—the heavens (Job xv. 15); angels (Job iv. 18); but Christ is altogether lovely and higher than the heavens. 2. All the excellencies that are in the creatures are eminently in Christ. 3. All these excellencies are in Him in a more excellent manner. (1) Perfectly, without a shadow of imperfection. (2) Infinitely, without limit. (3) Unchangeably and eternally. 4. Innumerable more excellencies than are in all creatures together are in Christ alone, for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. IV. USES. 1. Reproof to those who neglect or despise this knowledge. (1) Those who are not diligent to get and increase it. No knowledge worth having is to be had without diligence, and how sad that many are so busy about lower knowledge that they say they have no time for this. (2) Those who strive not to communicate this knowledge. To this may be attributed the ruin of families and commonwealths, and lays you under dreadful threatenings. 2. Exhortation. (1) To those that want it—be you persuaded to get it. (2) To those of you who have some of it—grow in it. (3) To attain it. (a) Be convinced of and humbled for your want of it. (b) Lay a good groundwork in the principles of the knowledge of Christ, otherwise you will but build in the air (Heb. vi. 1). (c) Let the Word of God be familiar to you (Col. iii. 16; John v. 39; Deut. vi. 6–9). (d) Make use of those who are already acquainted with Christ (Heb. x. 25; Prov. xiii. 20, xv. 7). (e) Be much in seeking God (James i. 5). (4) To grow in it. (a) Make all your other knowledge subservient to this. See Christ in everything that is good, make your knowledge of what is evil heighten your desire of Christ. (b) Get nearer Him and keep near. (c) Fix the eye of your souls upon Him (Exod. xxxvii. 9). Study the excellences of His person, the advantages of His offices, the riches of His grace. (d) Seek it not for curiosity, but that you may enjoy Christ more. (e) Content not yourselves with light without heat. Let every spark of knowledge kindle zeal and love. (f) Live up to the knowledge you have; that is the way to attain more. Let the light that shines in your minds shine in your lives (John vii. 17). (g) Let humility keep pace with knowledge. (h) Make use of Christ’s prophetic office. (*D. Clarkson, B.D.*) *The more excellent knowledge*:—I. The OBJECT of this knowledge. Unlike all other objects of human study it is single. Human science diverges into several branches.

And then it is not a thing or a system, but an individual. It is a knowledge of Christ Jesus as—1. God. To take a lower view of Him is to degrade His dignity and destroy His atonement. He is the Creator, and as the creator of a thing must be greater than the thing created, so the knowledge of Christ must be superior to that of nature. 2. The only revealer of God. You may study science in all its branches and be totally ignorant of God. The heathen world is an evidence of this. But Christ is the revealer of the Father's mind and heart. 3. The Redeemer. As guilty sinners, under the curse and condemnation of the law, we wanted a Saviour who should bear our sins and provide such a salvation as would harmonize the moral attributes of God, and make it honourable in God to pardon. Jesus Christ is such a Saviour. 4. The Provider and the channel of the Holy Spirit, by whose power alone we become living souls. Unspeakable as is God's precious gift to us, without the gift of the Spirit it had been of no avail. Take out the science of dynamics from the other sciences and you reduce them to a shadow. The Spirit provides the spiritual dynamics of Christianity and makes redemption effective.

II. ITS TRANSCENDENT EXCELLENCY. 1. Its majesty and grandeur. What is there that can be compared to it. The time will come when those around whose name an halo of scientific glory exists will stand upon the confines of eternity. Where will the splendour of human science be then? 2. Its certainty. There is a degree of uncertainty attaching to all science. You will rarely find two scientists perfectly to coincide. But there is no doubt as to Christ's personality, the lustre of His Deity, the efficacy of His atonement, &c. The only uncertainty is that which man's depraved nature invents. 3. Its adaptation to the highest interests of our nature, and its supply for all our yearnings after happiness, knowledge, and a nobler state of being. 4. The only knowledge that meets the solemnity of a dying bed is this. Here Bacon and Butler had to lie their dying heads. (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) *The excellency of Christian knowledge*:—Knowledge is one of the most valuable of all attainments. Happiness and usefulness depend upon it. The image of God consists in "knowledge" as well as righteousness, &c. It is indispensable for the formation of character and the regulation of conduct. All knowledge is good, but its highest subject is the greatest Being. Hence it follows that religion must of necessity embrace the highest kind of knowledge, and the knowledge of Christ is that of "God manifest in the flesh," exemplifying the perfections of the Divine character, fulfilling the purposes of the Divine mind. This is the theme to which the apostle deliberately bent his unequalled powers, and the more we know of it the less shall we wonder that he determined to know nothing else. This is the theme in which he prays that believers may be well instructed (*Eph. i. 16-19; iii. 14-19.*)

I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST. The whole substance of gospel truth, because every truth in Scripture relates to Him, and derives its value and use from this connection. In this view the knowledge of Christ is not limited to the facts of His personal history, but represents the sum and substance of saving knowledge. It is remarkable how Paul makes every other topic tributary to this. When he refers to the principles of natural religion it is to awaken sinners to their need of Christ. When he speaks of the past history of the world it is to show how it was a preparation for Him. He expounds the prophets, the types, the obligations of the moral law, all with reference to Him. He cannot recommend charity without speaking of Christ, nor express gratitude for temporal mercies without thanking God for His unspeakable gift (*Col. iii. 11*). Christ, then, is the one grand subject of the gospel, and everything, whether in nature, providence, or Scripture, is to be viewed in its relation to Him. II. ITS PECULIAR EXCELLENCY AND TRANSCENDENT VALUE. Knowledge is excellent in proportion to—1. The greatness and dignity of its subject. Some subjects are so inconsiderable that the knowledge of them is of little value, and a mind may be full of them without being enlarged, because the subject of its thought is insignificant. There is a distinction between the subject of our thoughts and the mere fact which may give rise to them; *e.g.*, in examining a flower a peasant may be studying the Divine perfections; in examining a world a philosopher may be studying the mere laws of matter; and hence the grandeur of a subject is not to be estimated by the magnitude of the object, but by the quality or relation which occupies the mind. On this principle the humblest disciple may be occupied with loftier contemplations than ever occur to an irreligious philosopher. 2. Its certainty. The mind may be dazzled by a splendid conjecture, and astonished by a wonderful narrative, but it can rest in neither until verified. The knowledge of Christ excels all other, inasmuch as it rests on the infallible testimony of God. 3. Its necessity. There are many interesting subjects of

curious research, but they are not of urgent concern. There are others necessary for some, but not for all. But in the knowledge of Christ all men are deeply interested, inasmuch as their safety and happiness depend upon it. 4. The magnitude of the evils it averts and the value of the benefits it secures. Secular knowledge is valuable because it averts temporal calamities and promotes temporal comfort, but the knowledge of Christ has reference to the interests of the immortal soul. 5. The moral influence it exerts. Many kinds of knowledge have no direct influence on character or conduct, but in this knowledge, all that is useful in truth is blended with whatever is beautiful in morals, and both are so represented that no man can be familiarized with the Bible without being elevated. Take, *e.g.*, the character of Christ. 6. The stability of its objects and the permanence of its use. "The things which are seen are temporal," &c. Religion only, of all the forms of human knowledge, is immortal; the usefulness of every other is only temporary. (*J. Buchanan, D.D.*) *Christ Jesus duly prized:—I. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE APOSTLE DELIVERS HIMSELF ON THIS GREAT SUBJECT.*

1. He openly professeth his esteem of Christ above all, and that not in general, but from his own experience, which teacheth us that the saints should avowedly profess their superlative esteem of Christ. Christ is not only to be enjoyed but to be confessed. This is for His glory, and that others may fall in love with Him. 2. With the utmost certainty—"yea, doubtless." He was not halting between two opinions. This is necessary for us with respect—(1) To the outward truths of religion, because—(a) Doubts are both afflictive and sinful. (b) They are enemies to our faith. (c) They are the spring of apostasy. (d) They are prejudicial to the growth of religion. So, then, for confirmation, study the word of truth; give yourselves up to the teaching of the Spirit of truth, and walk in the truth. (2) To the inward truth of religion. We should seek this certainty. (a) Because the saints may attain to it. "He that hath my commandments" &c. "Give diligence to make your calling," &c. sure. (b) Because doubts are hurtful. (c) The case of our day calls for it. A doubting Christian is unfit to act for Christ in a difficult time. Therefore awake from sleep; walk closely with God; examine yourselves; receive the Spirit so freely given of God to bear witness with yours. 3. With affection, counting all things loss and dung. The excellency of Christ naturally fires gracious hearts, because—(1) All their hopes are in Him, and (2) all their desires. II. THE GRAND SCOPE OF THE APOSTLE. Jesus is absolutely matchless. All sheaves bow to Him. The transcendent excellency of Christ is proved. 1. By testimony on the part of—(1) God (Isa. xiii. 1; John iii. 16). (2) Angels (Luke ii. 10-14). (3) Saints in heaven. (4) Saints on earth. (5) His enemies. 2. By evidence. (1) He is God, "the true God and eternal life;" therefore His excellence is infinite. (2) He is commensurate to the desires of the soul, which all the creatures combined are not. But "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." (3) Whatever excellence is in anything else, it is derived from Him. (4) All things besides Christ cannot make a man happy, but Christ can. (a) The creatures want sufficiency; but Christ is completely satisfactory (Psa. lxxiii. 25). (b) Certainty; but Christ is unchangeable. (5) He can do for us what no other can, procure pardon for sin, peace with God, a right to heaven. 3. By comparison. No person or thing is to be compared with Him. (1) Men on earth; the greatest one His vassals, the best only good through Him. (2) Saints in heaven are only like the lilies wearing a glory for which they never toiled. (3) Angels are all servants. (4) The highest earthly good is a broken cistern, and even grace and glory are but His gifts. III. USES. 1. They have a poor portion who are without Christ. 2. They have made a good choice that have received Christ. 3. We are to stand on nothing so as we may gain Christ. (*T. Boston, D.D.*)

I. THAT ONLY IS THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST WHICH TERMINATES IN AN INTEREST IN AND ENJOYMENT OF HIM. To confirm this consider—1. That all the knowledge of Christ that brings not to Him is but splendid ignorance according to the Word. 2. That knowledge of Christ which is not an interest in Him is mere opinion which is dubious and uncertain. It may be a good opinion, but it is not certainty. You will not commit your money to a stranger of whom you have only a good opinion. So it is with those who have only a speculative knowledge of Christ. Two points of saving knowledge exemplify this. Do you take Him for and instead of all? (Matt. xiii. 45-46). Have you committed your soul unto Him? 3. The true knowledge of Christ engages the heart and captivates the soul—"They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." As the loadstone draws iron, so does Christ the sinner. 4. The saving knowledge of Christ differs not in kind, but degree, from heaven's happiness (John xvii. 3). II. ALL THINGS ARE BUT LOSS IN COMPARISON WITH

THIS KNOWLEDGE. 1. In what respect? (1) Singly. (2) All together. What are the stars without the sun? 2. Proofs and illustrations. (1) An interest in Christ makes God ours, for He is God. (2) This interest is the one thing necessary. All things must go for necessities (Matt. vi. 25). Other things are mere conveniences. Man's desire is to be happy, and nothing outside of Christ is necessary to this end, for with Christ man may be happy and lack every earthly blessing (Phil. iv. 13). Everything that one really needs is comprehended in this: "He that spared not His own Son" &c. (3) This interest is satisfying to the soul, while nothing else can give satisfaction. He is substance, all else is shadow and dream. In Him are both suitability and fulness. (4) This interest is a most enriching interest—"All things are yours." (a) The Christian hath more in possession than the greatest on earth. What so great as a kingdom? The Christian hath the kingdom of God within him. Monarchs lose their kingdoms because they are outside them. Christ is in us the hope of glory. (b) The little that a Christian hath, having Christ, is more valuable than the abundance of a Christless man. (c) The Christian makes a sanctified use of what he possesses, and so "all things work together for good." The abundance of the ungodly is their curse. (d) What the Christian hath he hath for nothing, but others will have to pay a dear reckoning for what they have—"What is a man profited," &c. (e) The Christian hath a far better right to his little, for it comes by covenant and not simply by common providence. (f) The Christian's portion is but an earnest. (5) This interest is the only lasting interest. It will abide when we have lost all other things (Matt. vi. 19-20). 3. An induction of particulars. (1) Knowledge of other things is no way comparable to the knowledge of Christ either for pleasure or profit. Grotius said, "I have destroyed life, laboriously doing nothing." (2) Compared with Christ riches are lighter than vanity (Prov. xxiii. 5). (3) Worldly reputation depend, upon the uncertain thoughts of others and may be easily stained; but the Christian shall shine with eternal honour. (4) There is no ease that is permanently pleasant but in Christ. (5) Friends are much valued, but how often do they prove themselves like brooks dried up (Job vi. 15). Christ is a friend that will help in all cases. (6) Domestic and social relations are great mercies, but we must part from them. (7) Liberty is but a devil's chain without Christ. (8) Life and self are loss without Christ. III. Uses. 1. Of Information. (1) How foolish are men who, like Martha, are diligent to get other things, but who neglect the one thing needful. (2) Men are gainers, lose what they will for Christ. 2. Of exhortation. (1) Christ is willing to receive you. (2) Consider what you are without Him. (3) An interest in Christ is the best interest you can have in the world. (*ibid.*) That I may win Christ. 1. Christ is gained when we get an interest in Him and in His benefits (1 Cor. i. 9; Heb. iii. 14). The ungodly have no part in Him. The apostle had won Christ already, but he would win a full enjoyment of Him. (2) The word *κερδήσω* is put in opposition to the loss he had incurred, and means that there was enough in Christ to compensate him. I. WHAT GAIN WE HAVE IN HAVING CHRIST. 1. He is our ransom from the wrath of God, and so you have somewhat whereby to appease your guilty fears (Col. i. 14). 2. He hath purchased God's favour that we may have comfortable access to Him (Heb. x. 19). 3. Our natures are renewed, and not only the favour and fellowship of God restored, but His image also (Titus iii. 5-6; 2 Pet. i. 4; Heb. xii. 10). 4. Christ is our treasury and storehouse, from whence we fetch all our supplies (1 Cor. i. 30). 5. By Him we are made heirs of eternal life (Rom. viii. 17). II. HOW MUCH THIS GAIN EXCELS ALL OTHER. 1. It is most comfortable, for here is comfort at all times and in all cases (Phil. i. 21). 2. Most universal (1 Cor. ii. 22-23; 1 Tim. iv. 8). 3. Everlasting (Luke x. 42). 4. Sanctifying. III. Uses. 1. For reproof of—(1) Those who take no pains to get it (Matt. xvi. 26; Luke xvi. 25). (2) Those who part with Christ for temporal profit (Heb. xii. 16). 2. For instruction. (1) If Christ be gain then we may make some losses for Christ if we may not have them and Him too (Heb. xi. 26; Mark x. 29-30). (2) We should not murmur when others go away with other things, if we have Christ (Psa. xvii. 14-15). 3. To persuade you to get Christ. (1) He is the best gain if God be preferred before the creature, eternal glory before finding riches, the soul before the body. (2) This gain may be gotten at a cheap rate (Isa. lv. 1; Rev. iii. 18). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Winning Christ* :—I. It is THE CHRISTIAN'S GRAND OBJECT, AND SHOULD BE THE DESIGN OF EVERY ONE TO WIN OR GAIN CHRIST. 1. What it is to win Him and how. It is to get Him to be ours and enjoy Him. It imports that we are naturally without Him (Eph. ii. 12). (1) We must work and win as labourers do (chap. ii. 12). (2) We must fight and

win as soldiers—"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence," &c. Whenever a soul is on its way to Christ, the alarm is sounded in hell, and if the soul would have Him it must be in opposition to flesh and blood, and principalities and powers. (3) We must wrestle and win as those do who strive for the mastery (Eph. vi. 12-14). (4) We must run and win as racers do. (5) We must trade and win as merchants do (Mark x. 22). 2. Some reasons. (1) If we win Christ we gain all (Matt. xiii. 45-46). (2) If we win not Christ we gain nothing and lose all (Matt. xvi. 26). II. THOSE WHOSE GRAND OBJECT IS TO WIN CHRIST, WILL COUNT ALL BUT DUNG THAT COMES IN COMPETITION WITH THIS BARGAIN. They will count—1. Nothing too much for Him, but be content to have Him on any terms. 2. Cost what it will they will not think they are even hands but gainers. 3. Have what they will they will count they have nothing while they have not Christ. 4. Be about them what they will, if Christ be not in them they will count them loathsome. 5. Be in their way what will, to hinder them from Christ, they will shovel it out of the way rather than be kept back from Christ. III. THEY ARE TRULY WINNERS, LOSE WHAT THEY WILL, WHO GAIN CHRIST. Winning Christ—1. We gain a ransom for our souls. 2. A treasure. Solomon counted all that was in the world as two great cyphers—"vanity and vexation." But in Christ all is precious; grace, pardon, peace. They were purchased with precious blood (1 Pet. i. 19); they are wrapped up in precious promises (2 Pet. i. 4). 3. That which will turn everything to our advantage—"All things work together for good." This is the stone that turns all to gold. 4. A heirship. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) To win Christ:—I. IS GREAT GAIN. II. IS THE NOBLEST OBJECT OF AMBITION. III. IS WORTHY OF EVERY SACRIFICE. IV. REQUIRES SELF-RENUNCIATION AND FAITH (ver. 9). *Winning Christ:*—To the apostle Christ was—I. So identified with the TRUTH, that when he gained Him he gained the highest knowledge. II. So identified with the LIFE that when he gained Him he was endowed with the noblest form of it. III. So identified with SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE, that when he gained Him his whole nature was filled with power and gladness. (*Professor Eadie.*) *Winning Christ:*—The world has ever shown curiosity with regard to the inner lives of its great men. Hence it is that few branches of literature are more popular than autobiographies. The Church shares this curiosity with regard to the eminent servants of Christ; and it has pleased God with regard to two of them to gratify this feeling. David and St. Paul are to us more than historic characters; we are admitted into the inner workings of their hearts. In the text we have the key and masterspring of all the apostle's actions and motives. I. WHAT IS MEANT BY WINNING CHRIST. 1. Remember that St. Paul did not write these words in the first fervour and flush of a new conversion. It often happens with new converts that their impressions and resolutions are like the early blossoms of spring, which perish in the bitter winds. When the apostle wrote these words he had been serving Christ for thirty years, and had derived no earthly advantage, but had suffered every earthly loss for Him. Can any votary of pleasure after thirty years' service of self, sin, and Satan say that there is nothing more he desires so much as a few more of those sinful gratifications? 2. That which was before St. Paul was not Christianity but Christ. There is a wide difference between a system and a Saviour, between abstract truth and a living, loving person. This is always the object which St. Paul sets before himself and his readers; hence the vital interest of his life and writings. 3. The apostle desires to win Christ and be found in Him. Here we have the key-phrase of St. Paul's writings; but it is only a continuation of the Master's teaching (John xv.) (1) This has reference to the believer's legal condition before God. By faith man becomes one in Christ, and when God looks upon him, He looks upon him as being "a man in Christ." (2) But this has also a moral reference, being quickened in Christ from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. There is a great distinction between all human morality and the morality of the gospel. Heathen morals are many of them very beautiful, but they lack the grand desideratum—the motive power. In the gospel we get not only perfect precepts, but the motive-union with Christ. And there is this distinction. In ancient times there were thousands of followers of the systems of Aristotle or of Plato, but whoever heard of such an expression as "in Aristotle." Christ, however, is not an external teacher, but He is in me and I in Him, and so I have power to obey His law. II. WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THIS. 1. The loss of all that St. Paul counted gain. If ever a man could have gone to heaven without Christ it was he. He was conscientious, earnest, and ecclesiastically all that could be required. He had a high position and brilliant prospects. But he gave up everything to come as you must come, an empty-handed, empty-hearted sinner to Christ. But besides

self-righteousness and worldly advantages to be given up, a Christian must expect to bear ridicule and persecution. 2. But for all this loss he was amply compensated by the gaining of Christ. What will be the wealth of all the Indies to us when we come to die. (*Canon Miller.*) *Winning Christ*.—I. THE PERSON WHO WISHES TO WIN CHRIST. This coming from Paul awakens—1. Admiration. What an instance of the influence of Divine grace! He had been Christ's bitterest foe. Here we see the prophecy fulfilled, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree," &c. 2. Inquiry. Had not Paul won Him already? Yes, but his experience was the same as that of all other Christians in whom we find the good work begun but not completed. The Christian finds the war still going on in his members, desires a livelier assurance, wishes to grow in grace and to know more and more of Christ. It was exactly so with St. Paul. II. THE VALUE OF THE PRIZE. Saints are said to be the excellent of the earth; but He is fairer than the children of men—"altogether lovely." They have some excellencies, He has all; theirs are derived, His original; theirs imperfect, His complete; theirs finite, His infinite. He is the fountain of life. 1. Are wisdom and knowledge valuable? In Him are hid all the treasures of them. 2. Are power and strength? "He giveth power to the weak." 3. Wealth? His are unsearchable riches. 4. Life? He that hath the Son hath life. 5. Peace? "In Me ye shall have peace." 6. Security? "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" All this gain is to be reaped in life; but the believer gains much more by death: for then we shall awake in His likeness. III. THE POSSIBILITY OF WINNING THIS PRIZE. To what purpose otherwise is its display? Two questions arise. 1. Am I now a partaker of Christ? Have you ever felt your need of Him, sought Him, received Him? Do you believe in His name, renounce every other foundation, build upon Him, place all your dependence in Him? Then you may claim all the benefits of His salvation as your own. 2. May I become a partaker of Him? "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." That you may win Him He sends forth His servants with invitations; He offers His blessings gratuitously; He throws a thousand impediments in your downward course, so that you may go to Him. IV. THE DREADFULNESS OF LOSING THIS PRIZE. What would you do without Christ if you were to meet with—1. Prosperity. If a Christian met with it, he would possess it with safeguards, receive it with thankfulness, use it with diligence, as a good steward. In a worldly man's hands it is as a razor in the hands of a child—"The prosperity of fools destroys them." 2. Adversity. The Christian in this has "the consolation of Israel," and has more left in Christ than he has lost; but the worldly loses all without compensation. 3. Death. Only the Christian can meet that with equanimity, for Christ has robbed it of its terrors. 4. The day of judgment. (*W. Jay.*) *The great prize*.—To win Christ is the supreme achievement of this life. I. SUBSTITUTES FOR CHRIST. Some have one thing, and others another in His place. Paul had just enumerated several things, whose possession, while he was without Christ, gave him a certain sort of pleasure. II. BUT CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE THE VALUE OF THINGS. III. THINGS HE HAD GAINED BY THE EXCHANGE. IV. QUERIES OF PROFIT AND LOSS. 1. What is our gain without Christ? 2. What is our loss without Christ? 3. What must we lose to gain Christ? 4. What do we gain with Christ? 5. What must we do to win Christ? 6. What is the danger of losing Christ? 7. To what extent have we given up all things for Christ and the excellency of His knowledge? (*L. O. Thompson.*) *To win Christ and be found in Him* is perfect security and consummate blessedness. The language suggests a goal and a starting post; that "I may win Christ," the goal or end I have been seeking to reach; that "I may be found in Him," ready not only for resistance to old adversaries, but for a new start and onward movement towards Divine perfection. Consider—I. WHAT IT IS TO WIN CHRIST. 1. To count Him gain in opposition to what Paul once counted gain. There is an entirely new estimate of gain and loss. What is gain to me is what puts me on a right footing with God. Thus I once thought that my personal qualifications of birth, privilege, attainment might do. Now I see that for any such purpose they are worthless. In view of the end for which I once pressed then I now perceive Christ to be gain. There is much implied in your perceiving this. (1) You are in earnest as regards the end with reference to which you estimate what is gain (ver. 2). Is this so? Naturally it is not so. You care little about righting your position towards God; or is it your anxiety to stand well with Him? (2) If the latter, it is no wonder that what things were gain to you are now counted loss, for they seem but to aggravate your condition of wrong standing, however good they may be in a sense, and however you may multiply them. (3) But just as all else is thus felt to be

worthless Christ is seen to be gain. What a relief to find in Christ the reconciler and the peacemaker; the justifier of the ungodly and the revealer of God. How thoroughly He meets our case. I see an instant end of the weary attempt to amend the old position, and a way wonderfully open for the immediate occupying of a new one. 2. Christ is coveted and sought as gain. It is not enough to count Christ as gain. This is often done by those who evince an unconquerable repugnance to accept the gospel. But Christ must be really and earnestly sought as well as desired. 3. Christ is appropriated as gain. It is for nothing short of this that you are called upon to count all things but loss. This is to be done by faith alone. 4. Christ is won so as to be enjoyed as gain; and yet not as the miser wins wealth to hoard it, or the spendthrift to waste it, but for profitable use. II. TO BE FOUND IN CHRIST is it the fitting sequel of winning Christ. 1. For defence, that I may meet every adversary. 2. To meet and obey the high calling of God, that I may press on. As one with Him I would know more of Him. (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) *The believer's refuge*:—Paul had previously sheltered himself in fleshly confidence. I. THE REFUGE. 1. There are many refuges of lies. (1) The refuge of wilful ignorance. "We are no scholars" is often only an excuse for negligence and indifference. Do they wish to know better? if not the excuse will not screen the sinner in the day of God's visitation. (2) The refuge of carnal ease. Many live as though there were only the body to care for, and cry, "Peace, when there is no peace." Remember the rich fool! (3) Worldly pleasure. This is the refuge of many of our youth particularly. But blessed of God it is delusive and borders close on misery. (4) Self-righteousness, a house built on sand as Paul found it. (2) A hasty inconsiderate profession of religion from whatever motive. 2. Opposed to all this is Christ. (1) In His person. (2) In His love. (3) In His offices and work. II. THE BELIEVER'S SAFETY in it against—1. The world. 2. The flesh. 3. The devil. Conclusion: 1. Abide in your refuge. 2. Welcome others to it. (*W. Mudge, B.A.*) *The superfluity of the law*:—According to the design of God the advantages and sacraments of the law are of no avail since the manifestation of His Son, and that those who now beguile themselves with them lose their time and their trouble, as completely as though, after the rising of the sun, they still used the light of a lamp; or as if, in the strength of manhood, a person were retained in all the exercises and sports of childhood. (*J. Daillé.*) *Loss for gain*:—Even as a poor beggar discovering a rich mine or some vast treasures, is ready to leap for joy that he has found that which will make him rich for ever; he casts away his former rags, he despises his former poor and wooden furniture, for he has discovered that which will enrich him and make his condition plentiful; so the soul to whom the Lord has made this rich, this excellent discovery of Christ, he has found a mine more precious than gold, and larger than all the face of the earth; he casts off the rags of his own righteousness; his former accomplishments are now but as a beggar's furniture; his heart is full of joy; he says, Rejoice, O, my soul; rejoice with me, my friends, for I have discovered the unsearchable riches of Christ. (*D. Clarkson, B.D.*) *The excellency of the knowledge of Christ in the excellence of its subject*:—If the real worth and dignity of our knowledge in any department depend on the subject to which our thoughts are directed, it were easy to show that the religious peasant may find a nobler subject of thought in the structure of a flower, than the irreligious philosopher finds in the structure of a world! (*J. Buchanan, D.D.*) *The relation of the knowledge of Christ to the gospel scheme*:—It is said of Phidias, the celebrated sculptor, that in preparing the design, and in executing the elaborate carving of the shield of Minerva, over the portico of the Acropolis of Athens, he so curiously wrought and intertwined his own name with the work, that it could not be obliterated or taken out anywhere without injuring the whole. So Jesus Christ cannot be taken away from any part of the system of Divine truth, without doing irreparable injury to the beauty and perfection of the whole Christian system—"for to Him gave all the prophets witness." Christ was typically seen in Melchisedec, King of Salem; in the binding of Isaac as a sacrifice; in the persecution of Joseph. There was a knowledge of Christ Jesus set forth in the paschal lamb, as eaten by the Israelites, and in the lifting up of the brazen serpent. Christ was painted in hieroglyphics and read by the Jews in all their ceremonial observances. Look in what varied views and degrees the ancient seers had an apprehension of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, for he was the Shiloh of departing Jacob; Isaiah's "Root of Jesse;" Jeremiah's "Branch;" Ezekiel's "Ruler among the people;" Haggai's "Desire of all nations;" Daniel's "Ancient of Days;" Zechariah's "Fountain;" and Malachi's "Sun of Righteousness." All these

figures had their substance in their great Antitype. All their predictions had their measure of accomplishment in Jesus Christ. The writers of the Old and New Testaments are like the cherubim overshadowing the ark—face to face, and looking down at the propitiatory, which is Christ. (*J. Redford.*) *The superiority of the knowledge of Christ*:—When we are in the dark we are glad of candle-light, and glow-worms will make a fair show in our eyes; but when the sun is risen and shines in his full strength, then candle-light seems needless or offensive, and the worms that glittered in the dark, made no better show than other vermin. So when men are in the state of nature and darkness, then their Church privileges and carnal prerogatives, then their outward performances and self-righteousness, make a fine show in their eyes. They are apt to glory in them, and rely on them, as that by which they may gain the favour of God and eternal life. Ay, but when Christ appears, when the Sun of Righteousness arises in the heart and discovers His excellency, His all-sufficiency, then a man's own sparks vanish; then all his formerly beloved and rich esteemed ornaments are cast off; then all he has, and all he has done, privileges and outward services, are loss and dung. None but Christ for pardon, acceptance, life. This is the excellent effect of this excellent knowledge. (*D. Clarkson, B.D.*) *The excellent effect of the knowledge of Christ*:—The practical applications and uses of this knowledge are as important as its direct and immediate influence on the mind. The least practical kind of knowledge is useful, if it raise the mind above those sordid tendencies to which ignorance is allied; but the knowledge of geometry is the more valuable by reason of its many useful applications to mechanical arts; and astronomy itself, the sublimest of all the sciences, by reason of the aids which it affords to the practical art of navigation. The spiritual astronomy, which points to Christ as the Morning Star, gives a directory also to guide our course amidst the storms and tempests of that voyage in which we are all embarked. It lays down for our guidance a clear, simple, and comprehensive rule for the whole conduct of life, marking out the end at which we should steadfastly aim, and the means by which we should seek to attain it; and it affords us the blessed assurance that Christ Himself will be our leader, and His Spirit our guide. It is applicable, not only for our direction in every condition of life, but also for our comfort and support in the hour of trial: imparting those blessed consolations which the world can neither give nor take away; and even, in the hour of death, when all other knowledge fails, and leaves the soul to sink alone and unbefriended into eternity, this knowledge gives us that hope which is an anchor, sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil. (*J. Buchanan, B.D.*) *The necessity of letting go every false confidence*:—One night an inquirer, long under deep conviction, but still unsaved, dreamt that he was walking along the edge of a terrible precipice, and fell over it into a terrible abyss. As he was falling he grasped a little branch of some bush that was growing half-way down. There he hung and cried for help. He could feel the branch giving way. He looked into the black yawning gulf beneath, and again cried out for help. Looking up he saw, in his dream, Christ standing on the edge, and saying, "Let go the twig and I will save you." Looking at the terrible abyss below, he could not. He cried again; and again came the same answer. At length he felt the branch slipping, and, in the utter desperation of his despair, he let go the branch—when, lo! in an instant, the arms of Jesus were about him, and he was safe. He awoke. It was but a dream of the night. Yet from the vividness and instructiveness of its imagery, he was enabled to let go every false confidence and rely only on the true. Would that every anxious soul would go and do likewise! (*J. L. Nye.*) *The true method of reflection*:—If we rightly reject the world it is because, in the pure processes of our spirit, we have taken from it its nutriment. And, therefore, viewing what was in Christ as in comparison with Judaism, Paul felt that the old forms and types and usages were now as the refuse which the spirit had put away on receiving for itself, and appropriating for its full health and growth and nutriment, Christ's revelation. (*T. T. Lynch.*) *Willinghood lightening sacrifice*:—Men who have made the greatest sacrifices for the cause of Christ have hardly been conscious of them. So Livingstone, as late as 1857, said, "I never made a sacrifice;" and Hudson Taylor, the leader of the China Inland Mission, has publicly made the same statement of himself. It was in this spirit that Samuel Rutherford said, "The Cross of Christ is the sweetest burden I ever bore; it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or as sails are to a ship." (*J. F. B. Tilling, B.A.*)

VER. 9. And be found in Him.—I. TRUSTING. II. JUSTIFIED. III. CONCEALED. IV.

COMPLETE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Found in Christ*:—I. SHOW HOW OR WHEN GOD COMES TO SEARCH, AND THE SAINTS ARE FOUND IN CHRIST. The world is a confused heap, and many times the counterfeits are found among the jewels, but God hath searching times and will find them out. 1. The preaching of the Word is a time of plain searching in Christ. 2. A time of temptation. 3. A season of the Church's trouble and persecution. A true friend is known in adversity, so is Christ to the believer, and he to Christ. 4. The time of death and judgment. II. HOW AND WHEN THEY SHALL BE FOUND WHO ARE FOUND IN CHRIST. 1. As branches in the true vine (John xv. 1-6). So are they safe, for barren trees shall be cut down for the fire, but Christ mystical is a tree the axe cannot approach. 2. In a place of refuge. "The Lord shall be as a sanctuary to them." They are in the city of refuge where one drop of wrath cannot fall. 3. Under a covert, in a hiding-place—even the Mediator's covenant blood. 4. In the covenant, in Christ's chariot (Cant. iii. 9, 10; Isa. xxvii. 4-5). III. THE REASONS. 1. God will search and find out every one of us, be where we will. We may deceive ourselves and others, but God is not mocked who searcheth the reins. 2. If God find us out of Christ we are undone. We shall have nothing to shelter us when He draws us out of our lurking holes. 3. If we are found in Christ we shall be safe in time and eternity, blow the storm as it may. Over trouble He will lift up our head; and when death comes it shall be without its sting. IV. THE USES. Let it be your great care to be found in Christ as Noah in the ark, and Lot in Zoar. 1. Let not the searching time find you at a disadvantage. (1) In an unregenerate state—"dead in trespasses and sins." This is a soul-ruining state, fire meeting stubble; the judge the criminal. 2. Be found in Christ. (1) United to Him by His Spirit through faith. (2) Walking in Him. (3) Living in Him and upon Him (Gal. ii. 20). V. THE MOTIVES. 1. If you be found in Christ, He will be found in you, so shall you have a double security in time of trial (John xvii. 21-23). Christ is found in believers as in His own house. (1) His dwelling, and who will not defend that. (2) His banquetting house. What provisions He brings with Him for storm and siege. (3) His fortified house. "None shall pluck them out of My hand." (4) His temple, which He will not allow to be profaned. (5) His garden. He "will water it every moment," hedge it about and preserve it. (6) As the soul in the body (Col. iii. 4; Gal. ii. 20; Acts ii. 25-27). 2. If you be not found in Christ you will be found in a bad case in time and in eternity. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Found in Christ*:—The phrase implies—1. That there is an estate in Christ. 2. An abiding in it. I. LET US EXPLAIN THE PHRASE. It is taken from plants which are grafted into stocks, or from the branches which are in the tree. Of this union there are three degrees. 1. We are in Christ in the eternal love and purpose of God. 2. When Christ died we were in Him as a public person. 3. More properly now by faith, as friends are in one another by love. But as Christ is in heaven, how can we be united to Him? I answer, If a tree did reach to heaven and have its root in the earth, doth this hinder the union of root and branches. And although Christ be in heaven, yet are we united to Him by His Spirit, and receive influence from Him of all grace and goodness. II. THE DOCTRINES THAT ARE CLEARED HEREBY. 1. Justification by faith. For if the question is, How are we saved by Christ's righteousness? I answer, Christ and we are one, and whatsoever He hath is ours. 2. The sacrament. The Papists would have the bread transubstantiated, that the body of Christ may be united to us. But I ask, How is the foot united to head? By spiritual vigour passing to and fro through the body. It is not, therefore, necessary that there should be corporal union. Christ comforted His disciples more by His Spirit when He departed, than He did by His corporal presence. III. THE COMFORT OF THIS. Before we were in Christ we were in a state of horror and condemnation. But now we are in Him—1. Our nature is exalted to the Godhead. 2. Whatever we may lose in other states here is a state that cannot be shaken. 3. Blessed are those who die in the Lord. 4. After death we shall be with Him in our Father's house. 5. All who touch us touch Him (Acts ix. 4). IV. THE DUTIES WHICH SPRING OUT OF THIS. 1. In duties towards God how thankful we ought to be to Him. 2. It ought to stir us up to duties in respect to our fellow-members, particularly in charity to Christ's poor. 3. Towards ourselves. We are to carry ourselves with dignity, and to grow up into our living head. V. HOW SHALL WE COME TO BE FOUND IN CHRIST. 1. We must come where He is. 2. We must separate ourselves from what is contrary to Christ. Learn—1. That a Christian is continually under Christ's wing till he be in heaven. 2. There is such a time when God will search men out and lay them open as they are. 3. The foundation of future happiness must be laid now.

(R. Sibbes, D.D.) **Not having mine own righteousness.**—*The two righteousnesses*.—I. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN TWO SORTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. His own is either. (1) The false, superficial righteousness which He had as a Pharisee (ver. 6), or (2) any that might stand in competition with Christ. 2. The righteousness of God is His gracious method of pardoning penitent believers in the gospel, and accepting them to life in Christ. This is so called because—(1) It is found out by God (Job xxxiii. 24). (2) Given by God (1 Cor. i. 30; 2 Cor. v. 21). (3) Accepted by God (Matt. iii. 17). II. THE DESCRIPTION OF THESE OPPOSITE RIGHTEOUSNESSES. 1. His own is by "the law," the other that which is "by the faith of Christ," i.e., appointed by God, merited by Christ, and received by faith. 2. These are often opposed (Rom. iii. 21–22; x. 3). 3. The law may be taken in two ways, either for—(1) The law of works, which required a man to be justified by a perfect, sinless obedience of his own. This is opposed to the righteousness of God by faith in Christ (Rom. i. 17–18; iii. 20), and by justification is impossible, for none of us have it. If we had, there were no sin, and no place for Christ; but we have all broken with God, and can show no work justifiable by the law (Rom. iii. 12). (2) Or the ceremonial law. By this Paul proves that no man can be justified, and therefore the Jews sought righteousness where it was not to be found, and were guilty of a threefold error. (a) They thought that pardon and acceptance were to be secured by the bare works of that law. (b) They overlooked and rejected Christ, who is the end of righteousness to every believer. (c) They would keep up this law when it was to be abrogated. III. HIS DIFFERENT RESPECT TO EITHER. 1. That which he renounced was (1) partly the superficial righteousness of conformity to the external law, a mere speculative righteousness, and (2) partly the righteousness of the law covenant which some falsely fancied they might fulfil. 2. That which he affected was "to be found in Christ," &c. (1) The state of His person, or the way this is applied. (a) The word "found" is emphatic, and often used with respect to the day of judgment (2 Cor. v. 3; 2 Pet. iii. 14; Matt. xxiv. 46). It implies that the last day is one of exact search and trial. (b) "In Christ," i.e., incorporated into His mystical body, or united to Him by the Spirit (John xv. 2; Rom. viii. 1). Being united to Him by faith, love, and holiness, we are made partakers of His righteousness. (2) The righteousness with which He would appear before God. The righteousness of the new covenant is twofold. (a) The supreme righteousness is Christ's obedience unto death (Rom. v. 18–19), i.e., our great righteousness before God by which His justice is satisfied, and by the merit of which all the blessings of the new covenant are procured for us. (b) The subordinate righteousness, or the way and means and conditions by which we get an interest in and a right to this supreme righteousness is faith (Rom. iv. 3), and our continuance in it is conditional on a new obedience (1 John iii. 7; ii. 29). This has respect to the final judgment (Matt. xxv. 46), where the righteous are those who are fruitful in good works. Conclusion: We are justified by faith only, without works, as Paul asserted; and by works and not by faith only, which is the assertion of James. Justification hath respect to some accusation, and as there is a twofold law of works and grace, there is a twofold accusation and justification. Now when we are accused as breakers of the law of works we plead Christ's satisfaction as our righteousness, no works of our own. But when we are accused as non-performers of the conditions of the covenant of grace, as being neglectors of Christ the Mediator, we are justified by producing our faith or sincere obedience. Whence learn—1. That the day of judgment will be a day of exact search and trial (Rom. xiv. 12). 2. That in this day there is no appearing before God with safety and comfort without righteousness of some sort or another (1 Sam. vi. 20). 3. The righteousness of the law of works we cannot have (Gal. iii. 10; Rom. iii. 23; Psa. cxliii. 3). 4. Man having broken this law, is lost or disabled to his own recovery, or to do anything whereby to satisfy God (Rom. v. 6). 5. Because man was under such an impotency, Christ became the Mediator, and (1) Became a sacrifice to offended justice (Eph. v. 2). (2) A ransom for sinners (1 Tim. ii. 6). 6. Upon His death Christ acquired a new right of dominion over the world, to save on His own terms (Rom. xiv. 9; Acts ii. 36; Phil. ii. 7–11). 7. Being possessed of this Lordship, He has made a new law of grace for our recovery (Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 16–18). (1) He hath set down the terms of life and death. (2) The privileges of the new grant are exceeding great—pardon, peace, adoption, the gift of the Spirit, and the right to glory. (3) The danger of final impenitency and refusing these things, and not submitting to this righteousness is very grievous (Heb. x. 39). 8. The terms of the new law are repentance, faith,

and new obedience. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Righteousness* :—I. The righteousness of the law—1. Consists in works. 2. Is our own. 3. Is defective and useless. II. The righteousness of FAITH—1. Is through Christ. 2. Perfect. 3. Acceptable to God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) I. WHAT IS MEANT BY CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. Righteousness is the result of obedience to the law. Christ fulfilled the law in our room. 1. By His active obedience to its commands. Now the law demands of the sinner were very high. (1) Spotlessness of nature, for if the fountain be poisoned, how can the streams be wholesome. The Son of God satisfied this demand by taking on Himself a sinless body and soul. (2) An obedience as broad as the law—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things." Christ fulfilled all righteousness and did no sin. (3) An obedience raised to the highest degree the law requires. It is not enough to be sincere or do one's best. Christ answered this by His perfect love to God and man. (4) Continuance to the end without the least failure (*Gal. iii. 10*). Christ became obedient unto death. 2. By his passive obedience. Failing in active righteousness the law takes hold of the sinner and says, "Pay what thou owest." (1) The law required life as the penalty of transgression—"In the day that thou eatest," &c. Christ satisfied this demand by dying "the just for the unjust." (2) The sufferings must be voluntary, for God hates robbery for burnt-offering. Christ for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross. II. THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS RECEIVED BY FAITH. It is received and becomes ours by faith, as faith unites us to Christ. Upon this union follows a communion with Christ in His righteousness. The soul by faith marries with Christ and the righteousness is its dowry. The soul flies to Christ for refuge, and that righteousness is its cover. III. CONFIRM THE DOCTRINE. 1. That only can shelter us from the wrath of God which satisfies His law, and this righteousness alone satisfies His law. 2. It is the righteousness of God, so called because—(1) It is of Him who is God (*Jer. xxiii. 6*). (2) Accepted of God. 3. It is the righteousness of the only wise God to save sinners, when nothing else could do it (*Psa. xl. 6-7*). Conclusion. 1. Never entertain low thoughts of sin. It is the worst of evils, which could not be remedied but by the sufferings of Christ. 2. Never entertain low thoughts of forgiveness. Every pardon is the price of blood more precious than a thousand worlds. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *The believer's righteousness* :—I. ITS NATURE. 1. Not personal, but through Christ. 2. Not of the law but by faith. II. ITS ENJOYMENT. 1. In Christ in whom the believer dwells. 2. Is found here and hereafter. III. ITS SUFFICIENCY. 1. It is purposed. 2. Originated. 3. Effected. 4. Approved by God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christ and faith* :—History and our own personal life has no more strange and pathetic page than is suggested by the words, "I have suffered the loss of all things." 1. We are started on an infinite journey; and no surer witness to this exists than in the easy and familiar way in which we let object after object fall from our lives in our pursuit of what seems to be greater. Or like a general who leaves the stronghold he is defending, deserting cannon and baggage and the unfinished toil of months because the tide of battle has set elsewhere and all his force must be concentrated there, so are we in the great battle of life. 2. The same thing is true in higher regions. We cannot rest in intellectual attainment. We climb where thought is giddy; and at last, here is law. Where is God? Without that discovery knowledge is dross, and we can suffer the loss of it if we can but reach Him and be right with Him. I. THE FAILURE OF LEGAL RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BRING US PEACE. Through such a process as that to which we have referred the apostle had passed in the urgent march of his spirit to its home in the heart of Christ. There is a tone almost of solemn mocking in the appeal he makes to the past. "My Saviour did not find me among the offscourings of the world. He did not pick me from the mire. If any man had a right to boast I had." But it all led him to the "O wretched man that I am," &c. This law, under the mountain-shadow of which we have been standing, brought him, brings us, no peace. All that it can do is to open the doors of the temple, which by faith we must enter if we would behold God. II. THE HEART'S CRY FOR A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. 1. There is a condition where no such cry is heard—the Pharisaical. A man may go on looking at the outward so long, and so succeed in stifling his spiritual aspirations as to arrive at the conclusion that all he can do is to obey the letter of the law. 2. But a man who has found out that even strict obedience to the moral law cannot reveal God will understand this cry. The highest commands that law ever laid, and the lowliest obedience ever rendered, have no Divine significance but in the revelation of an Infinite Person, to whom we stand personally related. We ask to be clothed

with Himself. III. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT IS REVEALED TO FAITH. To the apostle the voice of faith that is in Christ was a sufficient answer to this cry. "Not having mine own righteousness." The Incarnation was the only possible answer for God to give and for us to receive. The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ that we might receive Himself. This is enough, and in Christ we have the righteousness of God. (*L. Mann.*) *The righteousness of God by faith:*—This righteousness is the only ground of acceptance with God. It is not of mine, but of God, as in His grace He has provided it, so that it is said of us we are "justified freely by His grace." It is wrought out by Christ and in His blood (Rom. v. 9); or it is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." It becomes ours through faith. This faith is "counted for righteousness," or subjectively "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Of the possessor of such righteousness it may be said that "a man is justified in the sight of God." Christ obeyed the law for us and suffered its penalty, and the merit of this obedience unto death becomes ours as soon as we can say, "We have believed in Jesus." He that was unrighteous becomes righteous, and escapes the condemnation which sin merits (Rom. viii. 1, i. 18); nay, enjoys the benefit of redemption (Eph. i. 7). When works of law are disclaimed, and faith is simply reposed on God, guilt is cancelled, acceptance enjoyed, and such a change of state involves a change of character (Rom. viii. 4). The sinner is not indeed held by any legal fiction to be innocent. The entire process implies his guilt, but he is no longer exposed to its penalty; he is held, or dealt with, as a righteous person, "the external justice of Christ Jesus being imputed to Him" (Hooker). And the result is (Rom. viii. 30). This righteousness, Divine in its origin, awful in its medium, and fraught with such results, was the essential element of Paul's religion and the distinctive tenets of His theology. (*Prof. Eadie.*) *Imputed righteousness:*—The grand truth of this doctrine lies just here—when a sinner casts himself in penitence on the mercy of his Saviour, God estimates him not according to what he has been, or is in himself, but according to what he is in relation to Christ. We ourselves are constantly estimating things and persons as they stand related to other things and persons. The geologist estimates the significance of certain remains according to the strata in which they are "found." The chemist estimates the action of certain elements according as they are "found in" this or that combination. The merchant estimates goods according as they stand related to the needs of this or that market. You present your sample; he refuses. "These things won't sell now out yonder in Brazil." You say, "Oh! but judge them on their own merits; see what excellent cloth, what beautiful patterns." But it is of no use. You go into a garden in the early spring when the leaves are just beginning to appear. Two branches are touching each other. The gardener says, "This branch will be laden with fruit, but that will have little or none upon it." You see no difference. The leaves are as fresh and green on the one as on the other. But the gardener judges them according to their relations. The one branch is "found in" a tree which he knows to be fruitful, the other in one he knows to be almost barren. Is it a fiction when he imputes the qualities of the stock to the branch? Or he comes into your garden and sees in one of your borders a plant which is not thriving. "That plant," he says, "will die here, put it in the hothouse." He comes back in a few weeks, and the same plant is "found in" the hothouse. "It is all right now," he says. He does not mean that it has recovered vitality or beauty, but it is in the fair way to health. Its change of relation has "saved" it. Or, say that you go into the studio of a famous artist, and you see him sketching a picture on the canvas. It is but little—only a faint outline; but he tells you his idea, and you know how he has worked out other ideas. It is only a beginning as yet; but it stands related to a master hand, and you can imagine what it will be when finished. Your estimate of the same picture would be very different if you "found" it in the studio, and under the hand of an inferior artist. Or again, you may be told that a newborn babe and a newborn ape are each a mere piece of flesh and blood, and that under the dissecting knife little difference could be detected between them. But the babe is "found in" humanity. It stands related to the human race, and you estimate it according to its latent capacities, although at present there may be no sign of distinctive intelligence. Or, you may apply to have your life insured, and you go to a physician to be examined. He inquires as to any illness you may have had, and into your present state. But he also asks about your parents; when, and of what they died, and also about your brothers and sisters. You might say, "Why not judge of my case purely upon its own merits?" No; his judgment will depend

partly on the family stock in which you are found, and he will "impute" to you the healthy or unhealthy qualities of the family stock. And is God not to estimate men according to their relation to Himself, and to His Son? No man is "justified" in living a life of sin, nor in living a life of self-confident Pharisaism; but when a man comes in a humble and contrite heart and throws himself on the mercy of the righteous One, praying for pardon, and cleansing, and strength to live a better life, his relation is changed and he is justified. (*T. C. Finlayson.*) *Salvation in Christ*:—A man had been condemned in a Spanish court to be shot, but being an American citizen, and also of English birth, the consuls of the two countries interposed, and declared that the Spanish authorities had no power to put him to death. What did they do to secure his life when their protest was not sufficient? They wrapped him up in their flags, they covered him with the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack, and defied the executioners. "Now fire a shot if you dare, for if you do so, you defy the nations represented by those flags, and you will bring the powers of those two great empires upon you." There stood the man, and before him the soldiery, and though a single shot might have ended his life, yet he was as invulnerable as though encased in triple steel. Even so Jesus Christ has taken my poor guilty soul ever since I believed in Him, and has wrapped around me the blood-red flag of His atoning sacrifice; and before God can destroy me or any other soul that is wrapped in the atonement, He must insult His Son and dishonour His sacrifice, and that He will never do, blessed be His name. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 10. That I may know Him.—*The path of life*:—I. KNOWLEDGE. II. POWER. III. FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST. IV. CONFORMITY TO HIS DEATH. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The believer's aspirations*:—It is said that St. Augustine wished to have seen three things before he died; Rome in its glory, Christ in the flesh, and Paul in his preaching. But many have seen the first without being the holier, the second without being happier, and heard the third and yet went to perdition. But Paul, in this and the previous chapters, expresses seven wishes which centre in Christ—that he might know Christ, win Christ, magnify Christ, be conformed to Christ, be found in Christ, rejoice in the day of Christ, and be for ever with Christ. Now these correspond perfectly with the desires of every child of God. Here Paul desires—I. TO KNOW CHRIST. St. Paul appreciated the value of other departments of knowledge. He was a scholar and a theologian; but after he had learned Christ they seemed to fade in interest. This knowledge was the subject of his preaching everywhere, as he told the Corinthians and the Galatians. He wished to know Christ. 1. Increasingly. The more he knew Him the more he wanted to know, and no wonder, for (1) in Him is everything worthy to be known. (2) This knowledge never cloy. 2. Experimentally. To know in Scripture is to see and to taste. It is not the speculative knowledge that devils have, nor mere historical knowledge, but such as a hungry man has when he eats, and a thirsty man when he drinks. It is appropriative of Christ—"My Lord," "My Saviour." 3. Superlatively (ver. 8). For what is the widest and most delightful knowledge in the presence of this? but as sounding brass, vanity. II. THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION. The word "power" makes all the difference between religion in the head and in the heart, between possession and profession. It is one thing to have knowledge, and another to have it vitally and brought into action. Christ's resurrection has a vast power. 1. In our justification. His ransom could avail nothing without His resurrection. "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain." But by it the Father publicly testified His approval. 2. In our sanctification, which is the renewing of our nature and the strengthening of our graces by the Holy Spirit, who is the fruit of the resurrection. 3. In our edification. Every sermon, &c., is vain if Christ be not risen. All the means of Christian growth are dependent upon it (Eph. iv. 7-14). What power it gave to apostolic preaching. 4. In our glorification. There had been no resurrection for us without Christ's. As in Adam, the covenant head, all died; so in Christ, the covenant head of Adam's posterity, all shall be made alive. III. THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS. Not in His merits: the crown must be for ever on His head. We know this. 1. By partaking of the benefit of His sufferings, pardon, &c. 2. By communion with Him through the channel of His sufferings—His Divine humanity, hanging on the Cross, and commemorated in the sacrament. 3. By enduring for His sake the same sufferings which He endured—the world's frowns, Satan's temptations. "Is the servant above his master." IV. CONFORMITY

UNTO HIS DEATH. Why not His life? That is not excluded. But His death presents in a condensed form all that we could desire to be on earth. We see in Him—
1. Great patience under suffering. 2. Great faith. 3. Great compassion for dying men. 4. Great filial tenderness. 5. Great love for repenting sinners. (*J. Sherman.*)

Knowing Christ:—He who of mortal men knew Christ best confesses that he knew Him but imperfectly. 1. How much, then, must there be in Him to know. Do we lose a sense of the Redeemer's majesty by familiarity with His name? See, then, His chief disciple, after years of contemplation, imitation, and adoration, confessing that the great object of God, manifest in the flesh, seems greater than ever, so that at the last he offers the prayer suitable to a novice. 2. This is true of all the works of God, whether in the material or the spiritual world, and is illustrated by what a climber sees of the starry firmament: from the bottom the mountain-tops seem among the stars, but as he ascends they seem to recede, and their vastness and distance are best seen from the summit. 3. What Paul meant is clearer from the following explanations. I. KNOWING THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION. Paul laboured and suffered much, and was pursued by great infirmity and frequent depression; but he saw above him the figure of the once suffering but now risen Christ—his brother throned and crowned. Looking up it seems as if he were moved to say, "Would that I could be raised out of what I am, and become as He is—victor over sin, sorrow, and death." In this sense we may feel the power of Christ's resurrection. In Christ, risen and glorified, is the image in which we may behold what we may become. II. A SHARE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS THE CONDITION OF A SHARE IN HIS RESURRECTION. He has just expressed a desire to resemble Christ glorified, but he here checks himself in order to show that what he desires is not an easy and instantaneous change. What he seeks is not simply repose and relief. He is perfectly willing to resemble Christ glorified by passing through the intermediate stages. He, too, would reach the crown through the Cross, remembering that "it is enough for the disciple to be as his Master." Whoever then would know Christ must face—1. Suffering—the suffering of arduous effort, patient resignation, and trust when faith is tempted to fail. 2. Death—the death to much that is attractive here, and especially to sin, as well as to the death of the body. (*T. M. Herbert, M.A.*)

The experimental knowledge of Christ:—I. AN EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IS SO GREAT A BLESSING THAT WE SHOULD COUNT ALL THINGS BUT LOSS TO GET IT. It is sometimes expressed by taste. Sight is the knowledge of faith, taste that of experience (1 Pet. ii. 3; *Psa.* xxxiv. 8). When we taste His goodness or feel His power we have an experimental knowledge of Christ. Many know how to talk about Him but feel nothing. Men speak of His salvation from day to day, but have not the effects of it. When we find within ourselves the fruits of His sufferings, the comfort of His promises, the likeness of His death, the power of His resurrection, then we know Christ experimentally. The benefits it confers show its value. Experience—
1. Gives us a more intimate knowledge of things. While we know them by hearsay we know them only by guess and imagination, but when we know them by experience we know them in truth. He that reads about the sweetness of honey may guess at it, but he that tastes it knows what it is (*Col.* i. 6). A man who has travelled through a country knows it better than he who knows it only by a map.
2. Gives greater confirmation of the truth. A man needs no reason to convince him that fire is hot who has been scorched, or that weather is cold who feels it in his fingers. So when the promises of God are verified we see that there is more than letters and syllables (*Psa.* xviii. 30; 1 *Cor.* i. 6; 1 *Thess.* i. 5).
3. Gives greater excitement to the love of Christ and His ways. The more we feel the necessity of Christ and know His usefulness in binding up our broken hearts, the more we shall love Him as our Saviour (1 *John* iv. 19). We may know the truth of the gospel by other means, but we cannot know that it belongs to us by any other means.
4. Engages us more to zeal and diligence in the heavenly life, which reports and exhortations often fail to do. (1) Because when, *e.g.*, we have experience of the power of Christ's resurrection it begets a new life within which inclines us to heavenly things—there is a principle to work with (*Gal.* v. 25). (2) When this life is gratified with the rewards of obedience, such as peace and comfort, it is an argument above all others to press for more. The Gauls when they had once tasted the Italian grape must get into the country where it grew. The spies were sent to bring the clusters of Canaan into the wilderness to animate the Israelites to put in for the good land. So God gives us the Spirit not only as an earnest (1 *Cor.* i. 22) to show us how sure, but as first fruits to show us how good (*Rom.* viii. 23).

(3) When this life is obstructed by folly and sin, you find more of Christ's displeasure in your inward man (Eph. iv. 30) than can possibly be represented to your outward condition. II. MORRIVES. 1. It is a dangerous temptation when the gospel comes in word only (1 Cor. iv. 20). It must follow either that you settle in a cold form (2 Tim. iii. 5) or into an open denying of Christ and the excellency of His religion. 2. If you have not this knowledge how will you be able to carry on this spiritual life with any delight, seriousness, or success? (1 John v. 3-10). 3. Without it you can have no assurance of your own interest (Rom. iv. 4-5; 1 John iv. 17). 4. Without it you will neither honour Christianity nor propagate it. (1) By word (Psa. xxxiv. 8). A report of a report at second or third hand is no valid testimony. None can speak with such confidence as those who feel what they speak (2 Cor. i. 4). (2) By work (2 Thess. i. 11-12; 1 Thess. i. 4-7). III. MEANS. 1. A sound belief of the doctrines of the gospel (1 John v. 10; 1 Thess. ii. 13). We cannot feel the power of the truth till we receive it. 2. Serious meditation and consideration (Psa. xlv. 1; Acts xvi. 14). 3. Close application. Things work not upon us at a distance (Job v. 27). Conclusion: 1. Look for experience rather in the way of sanctification than of comfort. The one is not so necessary as the other, and the Spirit may cease to comfort that He may sanctify. 2. Look to the thing and not to the measure or degree (T. Manton, D.D.) *Experimental knowledge of Christ*.—1. A man may have a competent and very extensive acquaintance with the whole doctrine of the Christian religion, and yet if he has not an experimental knowledge of Christ it is all vain as to salvation. 2. In the previous verse the apostle deals with his gain in point of justification, here in point of sanctification. I. WHAT THIS EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE IS. An inward and spiritual feeling of what we hear and believe, concerning Christ and His truths, whereby answerable impressions are made on our souls (Psa. xxxiv. 8; John iv. 42). 1. The Scripture says of Christ that He is the way to the Father (John xiv. 6). Now the man who has tried many other ways and finds no access, at length comes by Christ and finds communion with God. This is experimental knowledge (Rom. v. 1-2). 2. Christ's blood purges the conscience, &c. (Heb. ix.). The experimental Christian knows that sin defiles the conscience and unfits him to serve God. At length he looks to God in Christ and throws his guilt into the sea of Christ's blood; then the sting is taken from the conscience and the soul is enabled to serve God as a son with a father. 3. Christ is fully satisfying to the soul (Psa. lxxxiii. 25; Hab. iii. 17-18). We all know this by report, the Christian knows it by experience. Sometimes in the midst of all his enjoyment he says, "These are not my portion," and when deprived of these he can encourage himself in God (1 Sam. xxx. 6, i. 18). 4. Christ helps His people to bear afflictions and keeps them from sinking under them. The Christian sometimes tries to bear his burden alone and finds it too heavy for him. Then he goes to Christ and lays it on the great burden-bearer and is helped (Psa. xxviii. 7; Isa. xliii. 2; 2 Cor. viii. 9-10). 5. Christ is made unto us wisdom (1 Cor. i. 20). When the Christian leans to his own understanding he mistakes his way at noonday, but when he gives himself up to be led by Christ as a blind man, he is conducted in a way he knew not, and blesses the Lord who has given him counsel. 6. Christ is made unto us sanctification (1 Cor. i. 30). Apart from Christ the Christian wrestles in vain and his graces lie dead; but when he renews the actings of faith in Christ, and flings down self-confidence, he becomes more than conqueror. II. CONFIRMATION OF THE POINT. Consider—1. The Scripture testimonies concerning this. (1) To learn religion in all the power and parts of it is to learn Christ (Eph. iv. 20-24). (2) There needs no more to be known, for this comprehends all (1 Cor. ii. 2). (3) It is the sum and substance of a believer's life (Phil. i. 21). Yea, eternal life itself (John xvii. 3). 2. All true religion is our likeness to God. This is impossible without Christ, for He is the only channel of those influences which makes us partakers of the Divine nature (2 Cor. iv. 6). 3. Whatever religion a man seems to have that does not come and is maintained in this way, is but nature varnished over: for "he that honoureth not the Son," &c. III. THE MEANS. Faith closing with Christ. 1. Belief that Christ is such a one as He is held out in the gospel to be. It is the want of this that mars this knowledge (Isa. liii. 1). 2. Closure with Christ, to the very end that the soul may so know Him. 3. Union with Christ, so making way for this knowledge which is the happy result of union. IV. IMPROVEMENT. 1. Religion is not a matter of mere speculation to satisfy curiosity, but a matter of practice. An unexperimental professor is like a foolish sick man who entertains those about him with fine

discourses of the nature of medicines, but in the meantime is dying for the want of application of them. 2. The sweet of religion lies in the experience of it (Psa. lxxiii. 5; xix. 11). Religion would not be the burden it is if we would by experience carry it beyond dry, sapless notions. 3. All the profit of religion lies in the experience of it (Matt. vii. 22). Painted fire will never burn, and the sight of water will never wash. 4. The experimental Christian is the only one whose religion will bring him to heaven, which is experimental religion perfected. (T. Boston, D.D.) *Do you know Him?*—I. LET US PASS BY THAT CROWD OF OUTER-COURT WORSHIPERS WHO ARE CONTENT TO LIVE WITHOUT KNOWING CHRIST. I do not mean the ungodly and profane, these are altogether strangers and foreigners, but—1. Those who are content to know Christ's historic life. These know the life of Christ, but not Christ the life. 2. Those who know and prize Christ's doctrine, but do not know Him. Addison tells us that the reason why so many books are printed with the portraits of their authors is that the interested readers want to know what appearance the author had. This is very natural. Why then do you rest satisfied with Christ's words without desiring to know Him who is the "Word"? 3. Those who are delighted with Christ's example. That is well as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. His example will be better understood as we know Himself. 4. Those who are perfectly at ease with knowing Christ's sacrifice. This is a blessed attainment, but we should not forget that He was the sacrifice and is greater than it. 5. Those who look for His coming and forget His presence. 6. Those who are satisfied with hearing or reading about Christ; but Paul did not say, "I have heard of Him whom I believe," but "I know." 7. Those who are persuaded to their ruin that they know Him but do not. II. LET US DRAW CURTAIN AFTER CURTAIN, WHICH SHALL ADMIT US TO KNOW MORE OF CHRIST. 1. We know a person when we recognize him: and to this extent we know the queen, because we have seen her, and so by a Divine illumination we must know Christ who He is and what He was. 2. By a practical acquaintance with what He does. They tell me Christ is a cleanser, I know Him because He has washed me in His blood; that He is a deliverer, I know Him because He has set me free; that He is a sovereign, I know Him because He has subdued my enemies; that He is food, my spirit feeds on Him. 3. We know a man in a better sense when we are on speaking terms with him. I know a man not only so as to recognize him, and because I have dealt with him, but because we are speaking acquaintances. So we know Christ if we pray to Him. 4. But we know a person better when he invites us to his house; we go and go again, and the oftener we go the better we know him. Do you visit Christ's banquetting house, and has He permitted you to enjoy the sweets of being one of His family? 5. And yet after frequent visits you may not know a man in the highest sense: you say to his wife, "Your husband never seems to suffer from depression, or to change." "Ah," she says, "you do not know him as I do." That man has grown much in grace who has come to recognize his marriage union with his Lord. Now we have the intimacy of love and delight. 6. But a Christian may get nearer than this. The most loving wife may not perfectly know her husband, yet a Christian may grow to be perfectly identified with Christ. Looking at all this might not Christ well say now, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me." III. CONSIDER WHAT SORT OF KNOWLEDGE THIS IS. 1. If I know Him I shall have a very vivid sense of His personality. He will not be to me a myth, a vision, a spirit, but a real person. Then there must be a personal knowledge on my part, not a hearsay, second-hand knowledge. 2. It must be intelligent. I must know His nature, offices, works, and glory. 3. Affectionate. It was said of Garibaldi that he charmed all who got into his society. Being near Christ His love warms our hearts. 4. Satisfying. 5. Exciting. The more we know the more we want to know. 6. Happy. 7. Refreshing. 8. Sanctifying. IV. SEEK, THEN, THIS KNOWLEDGE. 1. It is worth having. Paul gave up everything for it. 2. There is nothing like this to fill you with courage. When Dr. Andrew Reed found some difficulty in founding one of his orphan asylums, he drew upon a piece of paper the cross, and then he said to himself, "What, despair in the face of the Cross;" and then he drew a ring round it and wrote, *nil desperandum!* (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Uses of the knowledge of Christ.*—Paul's acquaintance with Christ—I. RECONCILED HIM TO THE PAINFUL VICISSITUDES OF OUTWARD CIRCUMSTANCES (Phil. iv. 11-13). II. BROUGHT HIM HELP UNDER THE EMERGENCIES OF SPECIAL DANGER (2 Tim. iv. 16-18). III. SECURED HIM SUPPORT AMIDST THE SPECIAL INWARD TRIALS OF HIS PERSONAL LIFE (2 Cor. xii. 7-10). (Dean Vaughan.) *Characteristics of the knowledge of Christ.*—The apostle aimed to

know Him as being in Him. Such knowledge is inspired by the consciousness—not elaborated by the intellect. It rises up from within; is not gathered from without. It does not accumulate evidence to test the truth—it “has the witness” in itself. It needs not to repair to the cistern and draw—it has in itself “a well of water springing,” &c. It knows, because it feels; it ascertains, not because it studies, but because it enjoys union, and possesses the righteousness of God through faith. She that touched the tassel of His robe had a knowledge of Christ deeper and truer by far than the crowds that thronged about Him: for “virtue” had come out of Him, and she felt it in herself. Only this kind of knowledge possesses “the excellency,” for it is connected with justification, as was intimated by Isaiah; and it is “eternal life,” as declared by Jesus (Isa. liii. 11; John xvii. 3). The apostle could not set so high a value on mere external knowledge, or a mere acquaintance with the fact and dates of Christ’s career. For it is quite possible for a man to want the element of living experience, and yet be able to argue himself into the Messiahship of the Son of Mary; to gaze on His miracles and deduce from them a Divine commission without bowing to its authority; aye, and to linger by the Cross, and see in it a mysterious and complete expiation, without accepting the pardon and peace which the blood of the atonement secures. (*Prof. Eadie.*) *The knowledge of Christ a personal knowledge:*—The knowledge about which the apostle speaks is a personal knowledge. It presupposes intellectual knowledge, but is something else. It is the knowledge of which we speak when we say of a man “I know him.” What do we mean when we say this? Do we not mean, I have seen him, observed him, conversed with him, interchanged thoughts with him, spent time with him, done things with him, have been admitted into his confidence, written to him, and heard from him? These things and such as these are what make up personal knowledge between man and man. We should never say, “I know such or such a great man of history—I know Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon”—merely because we have read of them, and could give an account of their exploits. We should not say this even of the great men of our own time, its statesmen, generals, or philosophers—no, not even if we had seen them in public, or heard them speak, or read their writings—unless also we had been admitted to their society, and had exchanged with them the confidences which a man gives his friend. Even thus is it with the knowledge of Christ. We have no right to say, “I know Christ,” merely because we have read of Him in Scripture, or because He has taught in our streets. We have no right to say so unless He has spoken to us, and we to Him. Unless we have access to His privacy, and can tell Him our secrets. Unless we can go in and out where He dwells, and talk with Him as a man talketh with his friend. Unless we have not only read in Scripture that He is wise and merciful, &c., but have also acted on that information, and found Him so for ourselves. Unless in temptation we have cried unto Him, and received strength; unless in trouble we have applied to Him and experienced a very present help. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The natural desire of a Christian for the knowledge of his Saviour:*—Suppose yourself a man condemned to the lions in the Roman amphitheatre. A ponderous door is drawn up, and forth there rushes the monarch of the forest. You must slay him or be torn to pieces. You tremble; your joints are loosed; you are paralyzed with fear. But what is this? A great unknown leaps from the gazing multitude and confronts the monster. He quails not at the roaring of the devourer, but dashes on him till the lion slinks towards his den, dragging himself along in pain and fear. The hero lifts you up, smiles into your bloodless face, whispers comfort in your ear, and bids you be of good courage, for you are free. Do you not think that there would arise at once in your heart a desire to know your deliverer? As the guards conducted you into the open street, and you breathed the cool, fresh air, would not the first question be, “Who was my deliverer, that I may fall at his feet and bless him?” You are not, however, informed, but instead of it you are led away to a noble mansion, where your wounds are healed with salve of rarest power. You are clothed in sumptuous apparel; you are made to sit down at a feast; you rest upon the softest down. The next morning you are attended by servants who guard you from evil and minister to your good. Day after day, week after week, your wants are supplied. I am sure that your curiosity would grow more and more intense. You would scarcely neglect an opportunity of asking the servants, “Tell me, who is my noble benefactor, for I must know him?” “Well, but” they would say, “is it not enough for you that you are delivered from the lion?” “Nay,” say you, “it is for that very reason that I pant to know him.” “Your wants are richly supplied—

why are you vexed by curiosity as to the hand which reaches you the boon? If your garment is worn out, there is another. Long before hunger oppresses you, the table is well loaded. What more do you want?" But your reply is, "It is because I have no wants, that, therefore, my soul longs to know my generous friend." Suppose that as you wake up one morning, you find lying upon your pillow a precious love-token from your unknown friend, and engraved with a tender inscription. Your curiosity now knows no bounds. But you are informed that this wondrous being has not only done for you what you have seen, but that he was imprisoned and scourged for your sake, for he had a love to you so great, that death itself could not overcome it: you are informed that he is every moment occupied in your interests, because he has sworn by himself that where he is there you shall be; his honours you shall share, and of his happiness you shall be the crown. Why, methinks you would say, "Tell me, men and women, any of you who know him, who and what he is;" and if they said, "But it is enough for you to know that he loves you, and to have daily proofs of his goodness," you would say, "No, these love-tokens increase my thirst. If ye see him, tell him I am sick of love. The flags which he sends me, and the love-tokens which he gives me, they stay me for awhile with the assurance of his affection, but they only impel me onward with the more unconquerable desire that I may know him. I must know him; I cannot live without knowing him. His goodness makes me thirst, and pant, and faint, and even die, that I may know him." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The progressive knowledge of Christ*:—Did you ever visit the manufactory of splendid porcelain at Sevres? I have done so. If anybody should say to me, "Do you know the manufactory at Sevres?" I should say, "Yes, I do, and no, I do not. I know it, for I have seen the building; I have seen the rooms in which the articles are exhibited for sale, and I have seen the museum and model-room; but I do not know the factory as I would like to know it, for I have not seen the process of manufacture, and have not been admitted into the workshops, as some are. "Suppose I had seen, however, the process of the moulding of the clay, and the laying on of the rich designs, if anybody should still say to me, "Do you know how they manufacture those wonderful articles?" I should very likely still be compelled to say, "No, I do not, because there are certain secrets, certain private rooms into which neither friend nor foe can be admitted, lest the process should be open to the world." So, you see, I might say I knew, and yet might not half know; and when I half knew, still there would be so much left, that I might be compelled to say, "I do not know." How many different ways there are of knowing a person—and even so there are all these different ways of knowing Christ; so that you may keep on all your lifetime, still wishing to get into another room, and another room, nearer and nearer to the great secret, still panting to "know Him." Good Rutherford says, "I urge upon you a nearer communion with Christ, and a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn by, in Christ, that we never shut, and new foldings in love with Him. I despair that ever I shall win to the far end of that love; there are so many plies in it. Therefore, dig deep, and set by as much time in the day for Him as you can, He will be won by labour." (*Ibid.*) **And the power of His resurrection.** *The power of Christ's resurrection*:—There are those who think it indicative of an unspiritual state of mind to lay stress on the physical resurrection of Christ. They tell us that the all-important matter is His resurrection in the hearts of His disciples. But Paul regarded it as a fact of transcendent importance. He and the other apostles regarded it as a power. I. **FOR INSPIRING FAITH IN CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD.** II. **FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION** (Rom. iv. 25). The resurrection was a pledge that God had accepted the sacrifice. III. **FOR INSPIRING WITHIN US THE HOPE OF GLORY.** Death is to the eye of sense a mystery, and the materialistic doctrine darkens what faint hope of immortality may be within us. But Christ's resurrection "brought life and immortality to light." He conquered death, and to believe that He is "the first-fruits of them that slept," is to receive power to break the tyranny of death (ver. 21). IV. **TO SANCTIFY OUR NATURE.** This is perhaps Paul's leading idea. To identify ourselves with a risen Redeemer must exert a purifying effect on our souls (Col. iii. 1). (*T. C. Finlayson.*) *The power of Christ's resurrection*:—I. **AS SEEN IN CHRIST HIMSELF** (Eph. i. 17-21). 1. In it Christ as man was invested with all the power and glory of the Godhead. "All power is given unto Me." 2. When He returns it will be in the fulness of the resurrection glory. II. **IN THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE BELIEVER.** 1. Resurrection implies death, and to know Christ in His resurrection is to know that we died in His death as our surety (Rom. vi. 7). 2. As

judicially one with Christ in His death, the believer is one with Him in His resurrection. III. IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER. 1. We who were dead in trespasses and sins are quickened by it into life. 2. This life is sustained by a constant supply from the fountain head. 3. By this power we rise above the world and sit in heavenly places with Christ. IV. IN THE BELIEVER'S SERVICE. 1. Observe its acting in the earliest possessors of it. 2. Employ it in testifying to its power. V. IN THE BELIEVER'S RESURRECTION. 1. Christ's resurrection is the pledge of ours. 2. Ensures the triumph and glorification of the Church. (C. Graham.) *The power of Christ's resurrection*:—I. IN RELATION TO SIN. 1. The death of Christ, had the redemptive effort ended there, had sealed man's doom for ever; the resurrection made it vital, the spring of purifying and renewing for the world. From the ground the blood of Christ, like that of Abel, cries out against humanity. It is from heaven that Jesus preaches peace through His blood, and makes it a power to save. 2. The resurrection brought to man precisely the power he needed for victorious resistance to that by which his higher life was in process of being destroyed. The risen form threw glorious light on the flesh, as completing the incarnation. The body was redeemed by it from degradation, and consecrated as the Spirit's organ and shrine for ever. 3. When Christ had risen, men saw that the vileness, the curse, the stain, was the work of an alien and intrusive force which might be expelled, and in the might of that belief men for the first time rose in victory over those passions which had defiled the body. II. IN RELATION TO SORROW. 1. The mountains of the world are great or as nothing according as we view them from a valley or from a star, so all the storms and crosses of life dwindle looked at from the height of "Jesus and the resurrection." 2. The resurrection maintains the continuity of the life of the man of sorrows and the reigning king. So we need not shrink from our sorrows if we but bear in mind the glory that shall follow. 3. Nay, the men who first realized the power of the resurrection, "gloried in tribulations." It made them one with Christ, which guaranteed the ultimate victory. III. IN RELATION TO DEATH. 1. We have little power of realizing the anguish with which the men of old peered into the unseen. This was the world of light, of life—that of shadows and ghosts. To the children of the resurrection it is exactly the reverse. The sorrow and gloom is of time, the light and joy are everlasting. 2. The resurrection wedded the two worlds. Who now dreads to live or to die? Because "living or dying we are the Lord's." (Baldwin Brown, B.A.) *The power of Christ's resurrection*:—I. AS A FACT. That is our faith. Your philosophers who do not believe in miracle do not believe it possible, because they do not allow that God can interfere with, and is above the system He arranged. But we believe that God who made the world administers His own laws and interposes if He thinks fit. The power of the resurrection, proving the truth of Christianity as a whole, proves its exclusiveness as a system of Divine thought which is to constitute the religion of man. II. AS A DOCTRINE. The fact enshrines a thought. Simply considered as a fact, having power over the reason, as a part of the evidence of Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus is the same as that of Lazarus. But as a doctrine it is very different. "Jesus died," according to the Scriptures, and according to the Scriptures "He rose again." It is the fulfilment of a Divine purpose; and its power is an appeal to our spiritual nature, our conscience, and sense of guilt. III. AS A TYPE. As Christ died and rose, we are to die to sin and live to God, "as those who are alive from the dead." IV. AS A MOTIVE. Observe how these thoughts interweave. The resurrection as a fact operates upon the intellect and gives assurance of truth; as a doctrine it deepens the truth and touches consciences and expresses reconciliation with God; as a type, we rising from the dead and walking with Christ—that is the developed experience of the Christian man in the life of God. Christ was not glorified immediately. He lived for forty days a different life from His former one. So must we under the power of the resurrection. Christ is risen, therefore "Seek those things that are above." V. AS A MODEL (ver. 21). Conclusion: These transcendental thoughts, so far from unfitting us for the sober duties of life, ennoble and beautify life. A servant-girl may act on a principle which may bring her into harmony with the angels. You need not wait for Sunday to engage in Divine service. You have but to realize in the shop or the market the power of the resurrection. (T. Binney, D.D.) *The power of Christ's resurrection*:—1. We need more and more to look at the facts of the Christian dispensation; the doctrines we are required to believe have their foundations in these facts. Our tendency is to treat Christian

doctrines as if they were speculations. 2. The resurrection is an accomplished fact. It is sometimes attributed to Christ alone; sometimes to the Father; sometimes to the Spirit; so that it is brought before us as a blessed manifestation of the power of the redeeming God. 3. The power of the resurrection may signify—(1) The power which effected it; (2) the power of the fact itself, or—(3) the power with which Christ was endowed at it, and these words may include all. 4. To know the power, &c., is—(1) To recognize it as a reality. (2) To comprehend and appreciate it in its relation with man's redemption. (3) To feel its force upon the life. The resurrection of Christ is—I. AN EXAMPLE OF THE ALMIGHTY LIFE-GIVING POWER OF GOD. To know its power is to be conscious of the working of the same upon ourselves, quickening, renewing, enlightening, invigorating. II. A CONFIRMATION FOR EVER OF THE CLAIMS OF JESUS OF NAZARETH. To know its power is to feel assured that the son of Mary is the Son of God. This is essential to our taking full advantage of His riches and resources. III. THE SIGN AND SEAL OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. To know its power is to see that truth sealed not by His blood simply, but by His hand in the newness of His glorified life. Why is it we do not declare that truth more constantly and zealously? Because of our unbelief. Those who cordially believe it are constantly repeating it. IV. ADAPTED TO STRENGTHEN OUR TRUST IN HIM. To know its power is to feel our confidence strengthened in sorrow and death. V. CALCULATED TO AWAKE WITHIN US THE MOST GLORIOUS HOPES. To know its power is to become the subjects by its influence of new and enlarged expectations, desires, aspirations and affections. VI. FITTED TO RAISE US INTO NEWNESS OF LIFE. To feel its power is to rise with Him and set our affections on things above. VII. ABLE TO GIVE COURAGE IN APPROACHING SUFFERING. To know its power is to feel strengthened to endure all the will of God. VIII. SUITED TO RAISE THE BELIEVER ABOVE THE FEAR OF DEATH. To know its power is to feel that it is a pledge of immortality. (S. Martin.) *The power of the resurrection:*—I. AS THE ASSURANCE OF IMMORTALITY (Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 14, &c.). II. AS THE TRIUMPH OVER SIN AND THE PLEDGE OF JUSTIFICATION (Rom. iv. 24-25). III. AS ASSERTING THE DIGNITY AND ENFORCING THE CLAIMS OF THE HUMAN BODY (1 Cor. vi. 13-15; Phil. iii. 21). IV. THUS STIMULATING THE WHOLE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL BEING (Rom. vi. 4, &c.; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. ii. 5; Col. ii. 12). (Bishop Lightfoot.) I. WHAT IS INTENDED BY THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. The influence which that great event has upon the other parts of His mediatorial character and offices, connected with the safety and happiness of His people. This may be traced—1. In the open and uncontroverted declaration of His Divine Sonship (Rom. i. 4; Psal. ii.; cf. Acts xiii. 32; Heb. i. 3-5). 2. In its influence upon our justification (Rom. iv. 25). 3. In its effect on our sanctification (John vii. 39; xvi. 7-8). 4. In the exaltation of the saints to glory of which it is the procuring cause—"Because I live," &c. (1 Cor. xv. 21-22). II. WHAT IS IT TO KNOW THAT POWER? 1. Not merely the illumination of the understanding but—2. The heartfelt experience of what is said to be known (Col. ii. 12-13; iii. 1; Eph. ii. 4-5), corresponding to what the resurrection meant for Christ. (1) Our Sonship—"begotten again to a lively hope." (2) Our freedom from the law's penalties, which He has satisfied. (3) Our entrance into the glory whither He as our forerunner has gone. III. WHY, AS BELIEVERS, WE SHOULD DESIRE THAT KNOWLEDGE MORE AND MORE. Because—1. It is essential to the Christian character. 2. It tends to strengthen faith. 3. It teaches the true estimate of life with all its cares, and death with all its terrors. Inferences: 1. The religion of Christ in all its parts is intended to be practical and experimental. 2. The Christian should be always pressing onwards to higher attainments of knowledge, faith, and holiness. (C. Neat.) *The power of the resurrection:*—I. IN OUR JUSTIFICATION. II. IN OUR REGENERATION. The Divine Agent in this is He of whom Christ said, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come." So that the resurrection was essential to our being raised morally "from the death of sin to the life of righteousness." III. IN OUR SANCTIFICATION. Our continuance and progressive growth in grace begun at regeneration is the work of the same Spirit. IV. IN OUR CONSOLATION AND HOPE (1 Thess. iv.; 1 Cor. xv.). V. IN OUR ANTICIPATION. The moral magnet that draws up the grovelling affections and hopes of a man from earth to heaven is the risen Christ. Conclusion: We must know this power, by being justified, &c., which is the moral proof of Christ's resurrection. (H. Stowell, M.A.) (Text in conjunction with Mark xvi. 3-4.) *The resurrection is a power:*—I. To HEAL CONSCIENCE. No system of thought that does not admit

the fact of sin, or attempt to explain its meaning, or assist us in becoming delivered from its dominion, can hope to satisfy the needs of mankind. In all ages and countries the human heart has had two questions to ask about it, which nothing but the resurrection can completely answer. One is about pardon, and the other about righteousness. The one seeks peace with God, the other His image. And the resurrection is the power for both. It looks back and it points forward. It implies the Cross, and it presumes the Ascension. Why did He die? Not only as a Martyr, but as a Sin-bearer (Isa. liii. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 24). But if He had only died, while we should have admired the unparalleled sacrifice, we should have mourned its uselessness. But in the resurrection we see the sacrifice accepted, peace ensured, and eternal life given. Sin on the conscience is one stone rolled away, and sin in the will another. His grace helps us to die to sin, and live to God through union with Him who, as He bore our sins, and identified Himself with our misery, is also made righteousness unto us, whereby we through our regeneration grafted into Him, are before God righteous in His righteousness.

II. TO ENNOBLE DUTY. What is life? Is it but as the dipping of an insect's wing into the brimming flood of some tropical river—the quick submerging into a devouring sea of one after another of the myriad barks that are ever being launched on it, each with its solitary voyager—a journey between two nights. Then assuredly the saddest mystery about it is that it should ever have been given us at all. But in the light of the resurrection life is seen to be worth living, for the stone of a purposeless existence is rolled away (1 Cor. xv. 22); and with its new aims and responsibilities and functions and motives this life has a new meaning and force. There is—1. Its stupendous responsibility, for some day we shall rise to receive the things done in our body—that is, their results, whether they be good or bad. 2. Its potential grace (Col. iii. 1). 3. Its majestic consecration (Rom. xii. 1). (*Bishop Thorold.*) *The power of Christ's resurrection.* In it—I. THE UNITY OF DOCTRINE IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS IS ILLUSTRATED AND CONFIRMED. II. MAN'S NATURAL YEARNINGS AFTER IMMORTALITY ARE MET AND SATISFIED. III. A POWERFUL STIMULUS IS GIVEN TO CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. IV. WE HAVE A PLEDGE OF THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH, AND THE COMING OF THE LORD. (*Homiletic Monthly.*)

The power of Christ's resurrection:—In every occurrence there are to be considered the fact—that which actually occurs—and the consequences, actual or possible—what St. Paul calls “its power.” We know the fact of an occurrence when we have handled the proofs which show that it really took place; when we know how it has been described, what were its several aspects; but we know of the “power” of the fact when we can trace what its effects have been, or what they might have been or might be. It is easier to apprehend a fact than to take the measure of its consequences, its practical meaning, its power. If I throw a stone, I can ascertain the weight of the stone, the moment at which it leaves my hand, the distance of the spot at which it touches the ground. But what is hard to ascertain is the effect of the stone's passage through the air; the thousands of insects instantaneously disabled or destroyed by it; the radiation of disturbance caused by the displacement of the atmosphere, and extending, it may be, into regions which defy calculation. All of us understand more or less, at least, the general outline of the succession of recent events in Egypt; but what will be, in the course of time, their import and influence upon the condition and history of our own country and of the world, who shall say? So to apprehend a fact is one thing; it is quite another to feel its power. When then St. Paul utters his prayer he implies that already he has knowledge of the fact. St. Paul, being thus sure of the resurrection as a fact, was not embarrassed by an *a priori* doctrine forbidding him to ignore it. He was not like those old schoolmen whom Lord Bacon condemned, and who, instead of learning what to think about nature from the facts of nature, endeavoured to persuade themselves that the facts of nature corresponded somehow with what they already thought about it. St. Paul, then, had no need to pray, as have many in our time, that he might be assured of the fact of Christ's resurrection; what he did pray for was that he might increasingly understand its power. This power may be observed—I. IN THE WAY IN WHICH A TRUE BELIEF IN IT ENABLES A MAN TO REALIZE HABITUALLY THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD BY GOD. Our age is not one in which men believe, that whatever happens, all is overruled by a Being who is perfectly good and wise. There are circumstances in the modern world which make belief in the Divine government harder than it was for our ancestors. One is our wider outlook. Thanks to the Press, to the railway, to the telegraph, we know a great deal more of what is going on

all over the world than did any previous generation of men; and one consequence is this—that human life presents itself to many minds as a much more tangled and inexplicable thing than it ever did before. The disappointments in store for the conscience which is eagerly searching for clear traces of a law of right vigorously asserting itself are so frequent and so great, that men lose heart where heart and purpose are specially needful. Now, here the certainty that Jesus Christ arose from the dead asserts what St. Paul calls its “power,” for when Jesus Christ was crucified it might have seemed—it did seem—that the sun of God’s justice had gone down, that while all the Vices were being feasted and crowned in Rome, all the Virtues could be crucified with impunity in Jerusalem. But when He burst forth from the grave He proclaimed to men’s senses as well as to their consciences that the real law which rules the world is moral and not material, and that the sun of God’s righteousness, if it is at times overclouded in human history, is sure to reappear.

II. IN THE FIRM PERSUASION IT SHOULD CREATE THAT THE CHRISTIAN CREED IS TRUE AS A WHOLE AND IN ITS SEVERAL PARTS. 1. It is a proof that the Christian creed is true. There are many truths of Christianity which do not contribute anything to prove its general truth, although they could not be denied or lost sight of without fatally impairing its integrity. Take, for example, our Lord’s perpetual intercession in heaven. We believe in this because the apostles have so taught us. We do not believe in the creed as a whole, because we believe in Christ’s intercession. It is otherwise with the resurrection, which is a proof that the Christian faith is true because it is the certificate of our Lord’s mission from heaven, to which He Himself pointed as the warrant of His claims (John ii. 19; Matt. xii. 39–40; John vi. 62; Matt. xvii. 9; Mark ix. 9–10; Matt. xvii. 21, xvii. 23; John x. 18; Matt. xxx. 17–19; Mark x. 32–34; Luke xviii. 31–33. John xvi. 16; Matt. xxvi. 31–33). The resurrection was thus constantly before Christ’s mind, because it was to be the warrant of His mission. And when He did rise, He redeemed the pledge which He had given to His disciples and to the world. The first preachers of Christianity understood this. The resurrection was the proof to which they constantly pointed that our Lord was really what He claimed to be (Acts xvii. 18; ii. 22–24, 32).

2. What is the true value of this fact among the credentials of Christianity? (1) Paley makes a great mistake when he rests the whole case of Christianity upon the fact that the resurrection was so certain to its first preachers, that they willingly gave their lives to attest it. This mistake lay not in insisting on this fact—which is, indeed, of the very first importance as an evidence of Christianity—but in insisting on it as if it stood alone, and would of itself and unsupported prove to all minds the truth of the Christian creed; the truth being that the evidences of Christianity are not one and simple, but many and complex. Their strength lies in their convergence. The fabric which its Divine Architect meant to rest upon a group of pillars cannot be safely rested, even by a man of genius, upon one. (2) Another mistake is, that it is of no value whatever as an evidence of Christianity—Christianity is said to be recommended solely by the moral character of Christ; the supernatural incidents of His earthly life, and notably His resurrection, are treated as an embarrassing addition. This estimate of the evidential value of the resurrection is altogether opposed to the mind of our Lord and His apostles. They did not mean the resurrection to stand alone; but they assigned to it the highest place among the facts and considerations which go to show that Christianity is true: a countersign in the world of Nature to the teaching of our Lord in the court of conscience—the outward miracle assures us through the senses that the Being who is the Author of Nature is the same Being as He who speaks to conscience in the moral law, in the Sermon on the Mount, in the whole character and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we heard the inward voice of conscience alone we might doubt whether there was really anything external which warranted it; if we witnessed the outward miracle alone we might see in it a mere wonder with no moral consequence. But when the Teacher whose voice pierces, rouses, quickens the conscience is accredited by an interference with the observed course of Nature, the combined evidence is in reason overwhelming.

III. IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF CHRISTIANS. Our Lord is not merely our authoritative Teacher, or Redeemer, but also, through real union with us, the Author of a new life within us. St. Paul teaches us this again and again. Sometimes he speaks of our Lord as though He were a sphere of being within which the Christian lives: (2 Cor. v. 17); sometimes as the inhabitant of the Christian soul (Col. i. 27). This union is not metaphor, it is a certain experience. Our Lord, then, dwells in

Christians, and, as a consequence, the New Testament teaches us that the mysteries of His earthly life are reproduced, after a manner, in the Christian soul. If Christ is born supernaturally of a virgin mother, the Christian is made God's child by adoption and grace; apostles are in travail until Christ be formed in their converts. If Christ is crucified on Mount Calvary, the Christian, too, has a Calvary where he, crucified with Christ, crucifies "the flesh, with the affections and lusts." If Christ, while apostles behold, is taken up into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Christian in heart and mind with Him ascends, with Him continually dwells, is made to sit together with Him in heavenly places. And, in like manner, if Christ rose from the dead the third day, according to the Scriptures, the Christian also has experience of an inward resurrection. Conclusion: Of this power lodged in the Christian soul there are three characteristics. 1. Christ rose really. It was not a phantom that haunted the upper chamber, &c. And our Easter resurrection from sin will be no less real if it is His power by which we are rising (Rev. iii. 1).

2. Our Lord rose to lead, for the most part, a hidden life. On the day of His resurrection He appeared five times, but rarely afterwards during the forty days. So it is with the risen life of the soul. It is not constantly haunted before the eyes of men; it seeks retirement, solitude, and the sincerities which these ensure (Col. iii. 1-4). 3. Our Lord being raised, "dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him," &c. So with him who shares that risen life. (*Canon Liddon.*)

The power of the resurrection in sorrow:—The letter of condolence written by Sulpicius to his friend Cicero who was mourning the loss of his beloved daughter, beautiful as it is, shows us that the best comfort which sentiment and philosophy can offer, is utterly powerless to bind up the broken heart. "Why grieve?" asks the sympathizing Roman, doing all that kindness and ingenuity could suggest to comfort his afflicted friend. "Surely after seeing your country enslaved, your heart should be indifferent to so small a matter as the loss of a poor, weak, tender woman." And then Sulpicius gravely adds, as if such considerations could console the afflicted, "Do not forget that you are Cicero—the wise, the philosophical Cicero, who was wont to give advice to others. Remember those judicious counsels now, and let it not be said that fortitude is the single virtue to which my friend is a stranger." Philosophy had not quite expended itself in these rapid platitudes, but the chief ground of comfort was reserved for the last. "In my return out of Asia," the well-meaning Sulpicius goes on to say, "as I was sailing from Ægina towards Megara, I amused myself with contemplating the circumjacent countries. Behind me lay Ægina, before me Megara; on my right I saw Piræus, and on my left Corinth. These cities, once so flourishing and magnificent, now presented nothing to my view but a sad spectacle of desolation. Alas, I said to myself, shall such a short-lived creature as man complain, when one of his race falls either by the hand of violence, or by the common cause of nature, while in this narrow compass so many great and glorious cities, formed for a much longer duration, thus lie extended in ruins?" Cold comfort, this! Would such reasoning help you to dry your scalding tears? Does it not seem like a hollow mockery of the heart's great grief? When, however, "the power of Christ's resurrection" is known and felt, with what different eyes we look upon the grassy mounds which cover the remains of the departed! The dismal spot is changed at once into a field sown with the seeds of immortality. The Saviour's blood-stained banner, emblazoned with the cross, which is carried before His people, in their triumphal march, bears the cheering inscription, "I am the resurrection and the life!" (*J. N. Norton.*)

The fellowship of His sufferings.—*The fellowship of Christ's sufferings*:—I. **WHAT IT IMPLIES**—a believing appreciation of them—evidenced by suffering in Christ's service, for His sake, with and for the benefit of His people. II. **WHY AN OBJECT OF AMBITION.** It implies gratitude, honour, hope, union with Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) These sufferings may be considered in two ways. I. **AS EXPIATORY OF OUR SINS,** BORNE BY JESUS CHRIST IN OUR STEAD IN HIS QUALITY OF SURETY. And of these we are partakers, inasmuch as, embracing them by faith, God imputes them to us, and communicates to us the fruit thereof, namely, Divine and perfect righteousness, by which, absolved from all our sins, we become acceptable to God as His dear children, and can never more be called to endure any meritorious or expiatory sufferings as were those of the Saviour. II. **AS MODELS,** patterns which Jesus has left us to follow, showing us the path by which it is the good pleasure of the Father to conduct us to salvation. And thus we are partakers with Him, being called to suffer after His example. And this fellowship may also be considered—1. **AS**

interior, the mortification of sin within us, the crucifixion of the old nature, trans-

piercing it with His thorns and nails, drinking of His vinegar, and thus putting it to death by degrees; in which the passion of the Saviour is represented within our hearts (Rom. vi. 5-6; Gal. ii. 20; v. 24). 2. Exterior; the part we have in the afflictions and persecutions of the Church, for the confirmation of the truth of God, for the glory of Jesus, for the edification of men (Rom. viii. 29; 2 Tim. iii. 12.) (*J. Daillé.*) *The fellowship of Christ's sufferings.*—I. FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST GENERALLY.

1. In the enjoyment of the Divine favour—"This is My beloved Son," "We are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," "Behold what manner of love," &c. What a word for (1) Aliens and outcasts. (2) Timorous disciples. (3) Happy believers. (4) Dying saints. 2. In the possession of the Spirit. To Him the Spirit was given without measure for the perfect fulfilment of all His offices; and because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. (1) For conversion. (2) Sanctification. (3) Enjoyment. (4) As an earnest of heaven. 3. In His merits. (1) The righteousness of Christ was perfect in its universality, motive, duration, spirituality. (2) We may have fellowship in these merits, for Christ is "the Lord our righteousness." 4. In His resurrection. 5. In His glory.

II. FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST IN HIS SUFFERINGS. This is explained by the following clause. 1. What is there in the saints which should die? Sin. How does this principle of sin manifest itself? In—(1) Unbelief. (2) Hardness of heart. (3) Impenitence. (4) Alienation from God. (5) Pride. (6) Envy. (7) Earthly-mindedness. 2. How does this principle die, so that we may be conformed to the death of Christ? (1) Not by a natural death, but a violent one inflicted by an outside hand. It will never die of its own accord, or of disease. It must be mortified, crucified. (2) Crucifixion was an ignominious death reserved for slaves and rebels, and does not sin merit such a death? (3) A lingering death. And so sin does not die all at once. This should teach us patience, watchfulness, continued looking unto Jesus. 3. How may we know that we have His fellowship? By (1) our hatred of sin; (2) our fervent prayer against it; (3) our desire for sanctification; (4) our joyful anticipation of a sinless world. (*A. Pope.*) *By the fellowship of His sufferings.*—1. We are not here to understand a participation in those He endured as the substitute for sinners, although in a certain sense we do share them, and that not only in the sense of enjoying their advantages. They are ours because Christ suffered in our room and stead. But here Paul refers to Christ's sufferings in general. 2. Nor are we to understand them as metaphorical; that as Christ died, so are we to die to sin; as Christ was nailed to the cross, so are we to crucify our corrupt passions. This is an important truth, and Paul emphasizes it elsewhere. But here it is a real fellowship in positive pain to which he adverts. 3. This was a strange desire, one which few of us would entertain. We wish to have fellowship in joy, and seek how we can pass through life with the least inconvenience. It would not have been surprising had the apostle denied fellowship with Christ in His glory. Yet he did not desire suffering for its own sake, but for its benefit. He knew well that God's order was first the cross, then the crown; fellowship with Christ, first in suffering, then in glory.

I. IN WHAT SUFFERINGS CAN WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST? 1. Negatively. (1) Not in His atoning sufferings. These He bore alone, and we cannot partake in them. No man can make atonement for his own or others' sins. (2) Not in sufferings which arise out of guilt. As we cannot be partakers in Christ's atoning, He cannot partake of our sinful sufferings. In the accusation of conscience, sense of guilt, fear of wrath, loss of character, evil effects in self and others, He can have no share. He "was holy, harmless," &c. (3) Not in certain forms of bodily affliction. Christ never was sick or unwell. Of course there is an important sense in which He was a partaker of this class of sufferings. His deep sympathy, sensitive tenderness, made Him feel the afflictions of others keenly. 2. Positively. We are partakers in those which arise—(1) From persecution for righteousness' sake. Such constituted a large portion of our Lord's. His whole life was one of persecution, beginning with His birth, closing only with His death. In this respect the apostles were conformed to their Master. It is true, thank God, that we are not now liable to sufferings of the same nature; but a man who maintains a high standard of religion, and condemns the world by his conduct, will meet with persecution in the way of petty annoyances, designed misconceptions, and coldness. (2) From sympathy with the distressed. Every distress Christ witnessed was photographed on His soul. "We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched," &c. In this sense believers must be conformed to Christ. The same loving, sympathizing spirit that was in Him must be in them. (3) From grief for sin. Much of Christ's

sorrow arose from unavoidable intercourse with the wicked. When infinite purity comes in contact with impurity, sorrow and moral indignation must be the result. And so it is with true believers. The state of the world around them, drunkenness, sabbath profanation, &c., must be peculiarly afflictive. (4) From spiritual distress. This Christ knew well in Gethsemane and on the cross, when He complained of spiritual desertion, and similar sufferings are experienced by believers when the light of God's countenance is obscured. II. THE BENEFITS ARISING FROM THIS FELLOWSHIP. "Sorrow is better than laughter." Uninterrupted prosperity has a prejudicial influence over our spiritual nature, and tempts us to forget God. Suffering—1. Purifies the soul. In the furnace of affliction the dross of earth is removed, passions are mortified; pride is humbled, and so our graces are confirmed and strengthened. 2. Draws forth the better qualities of a man. The seeds of virtue germinate in the hotbed of affliction. 3. Enables us to comfort others (2 Cor. i. 4, &c.). 4. Prepares for heaven. "Our light afflictions," &c. Conclusion: Suffering by itself will not produce these benefits; only when accompanied by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The fire which melts some substances hardens others: so some are improved by affliction, while others by reason of their own perverseness are made worse. (P. J. Gloag, D.D.)

The fellowship of Christ's sufferings.—I. THIS KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST AND HIS SUFFERINGS HERE SO ARDENTLY DESIRED. We may have it—1. By an actual participation in suffering for His sake. Many persons of affected sensibility feel a sort of delight in following Christ into the judgment hall and to Calvary who have no heart to make sacrifice for His service. Their hearts seem moved, but when persecution arises they walk no more with Him. 2. By the cordial reception of the benefits secured to us by His sufferings in the exercise of a lively faith. (1) Pardon. (2) Purity. (3) Reconciliation and peace. (4) Life spiritual and eternal. 3. By a tender sympathy with all His followers in the sufferings they endure. All the members of the body feel if one be afflicted, so do all the members of the body of Christ. II. THE GROUNDS OF THIS PREFERENCE. 1. The knowledge transcends all other as to its importance. All else is earthly and therefore transient; this affects the dearest and eternal interests of men. 2. It is infinitely more valuable than testimony or theory. (T. Raffles, D.D.) *The fellowship of Christ's sufferings.*—Historically the disciples found themselves incapable of entering into the fellowship and sufferings of Jesus till touched by the power of His resurrection. They gathered with Him round the supper table, and gazed into His sorrowful countenance, but could not understand the mystery of His sufferings. There was a veil upon their heart, and a strange indescribable barrier between them and Him. "They were amazed" as Jesus went before them to Jerusalem, "and as they followed they were afraid." They stood beside Him bravely for a moment in the garden, but when they saw Him bound and helpless when they expected miraculous power, they all forsook Him and fled. How different it was when these very men saw things as in the light of the glory that burst from that broken tomb; then they began to understand all that Moses and the prophets had spoken, and their hearts burned within them as they began for the first time to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings. A little further on in their history, and the power of the risen Christ has come down in the flood-tide of Pentecost, and what a change is wrought. They who shrank back from suffering—that Peter who was ready to say, "That be far from Thee, Lord," and denied his Master—that man gathers his fellows round him, and they lift up the voice of praise, rejoicing that they are counted worthy to suffer persecution for the sake of Christ. And as it was with them historically, so it seems to be doctrinally here. Do we desire that the Lord may nerve us to participate in His sufferings? In proportion to the tide of new resurrection, life is strong in us. Shall we dare to stretch out our trembling hand to grasp His cup? I. THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS. The word "fellowship" occurs in the case of the partnership which existed between the fishermen of Galilee, and in the case of the early Christians, who "had all things common." So we are not only permitted to sympathize with Christ as the Man of sorrows, but that, just as two partners in a firm are both joint possessors of the capital which belongs to the firm, so that wondrous wealth of sorrow which belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ, so far as it is a source of wealth, belongs in a measure to us, who are partners with Him. As the wealth of the disciples was thrown into one fund, and distributed amongst all, so the wealth of sorrow which belonged to our great Head is thrown into one fund with all the sorrows of those who are His members, and we are partakers with Him of that which is no longer to us a source of loss, but, on the contrary, a perennial source of gain. And to this

common fund we are each of us permitted in our measure to contribute (Col. i. 24).

II. The fellowship or His sufferings. 1. Fellowship with the sufferer. Mere suffering will do nothing for us. We may torture ourselves if we will, but shall continue as ungodlike as before. What we want is to suffer in the right way, and that is in fellowship with Christ. How did He suffer? Not by entailing suffering on Himself, or courting it for its own sake. He was the Man of sorrows because it was His meat to do His Father's will. Considerations of pleasure and pain were subordinate. Psalm cxviii. 27, is prophetic of the passion. (1) God's light—the light of the Divine purpose resting upon the problem of human life—indicated the way that led to Calvary. It led the Son into the darkness; yet it was not the less precious to the heart of the Son for that. And we, too, if we would have real fellowship with Jesus, must see to it that our fellowship is intelligent fellowship. Some of the broken-hearted followers of Christ gathered round His cross, and certainly suffered while He suffered. Yet had they no real fellowship in His sufferings, because they had not risen to the discovery of His design. Is it not too often so even with us? We have our sorrows; but the ray of light has not yet entered our souls, and the result is that we have no fellowship with Christ in our sufferings; and this, not so much because God is unwilling to give us the light, as because we shrink, like Peter, from the illumination which reveals the cross, and thus His light becomes obscured, and we lose the moral power which should have raised us into fellowship with His sufferings. (2) How strong were the cords with which Christ was bound! It was not the brute force of the soldiers, nor the mandate of the governor, nor even the cruel nails that fastened Him to the tree. These He could have broken, but there were other cords, and oh how strong, that bound Him there. There was the cord of—(a) Obedience. The Father's will had revealed itself, and that was law to Him. (b) Love, and that glowed with furnace heat towards God and man that proved itself stronger than death. Blessed are they whose love grows with sorrow. It is only thus that we rise to true fellowship with the sufferings of Christ. (c) Faith. His very enemies bore witness that He trusted in God. His last words upon the cross testified that His trust remained unshaken. If we would rise into fellowship with His sufferings, it must be by stepping forward in the spirit of faith, even though it should be into a burning, fiery furnace. Suffering ceases to be sanctified when it is infected with mistrust. 2. Our privilege of fellowship in the sufferings. Much was borne that we might not have to bear; but as I gaze at yonder cross I interpret the nature of our fellowship in the light of the next clause. Take the voices which sound from the dying Son of Man. (1) "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do!" Can I have fellowship in that? I believe there is not one of us that follows our Lord fully, but we shall be more or less misunderstood, misinterpreted, but let us endeavour to enter into sympathy with the heart and mind of Jesus; and then, if a rough word is spoken, or a brother does not seem to understand us, Christ's prayer will rise to our lips. (2) "I thirst." Thank God our thirst shall never be what His was. Yet I am reminded, "Blessed are they that thirst," &c. And do not be cast down that you have not received the fulness of blessing. Is it not something that your thirst for God and righteousness makes you in a sense partaker of the sufferings of Jesus. (3) "Woman, behold thy son! Son, behold thy mother." In that I see something that I may have fellowship with. In the midst of all His agony He found time to think upon the sorrows of His broken-hearted mother and His lonely disciple, and to mingle their griefs with His own. How is human sorrow sanctified by such a revelation as this? Does bereavement come? The same pangs that shot through my Saviour's heart are become mine, and I am a partaker with Him. (4) "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was forsaken in order that you and I might not be forsaken. And yet, let us consider what it was that caused that cry: it was the dark shadow of imputed sin coming between His soul and God. And as we enter into the fellowship of the sufferings of Jesus, our views of sin will become more keen and clear, and also bring along with them a more painful emotion than could otherwise be ours. Let me enter into the fellowship of the sufferings of Jesus, that will make me hate sin. (5) "This day shalt Thou be with Me in Paradise." Parched are His lips, and His heart breaking; yet when that dying malefactor's cry reaches His ear, His eye is turned upon that poor dying man, and the word of peace and pardon is spoken; and the suffering Son of Man takes on Himself the burden of the dying sufferer at His side. Oh for a heart to sorrow in all the sorrows of humanity! (6) "It is finished." Oh to be partakers with

Christ in the glory of that last cry, which is the triumphant issue of suffering. When the will has been so fully yielded that God has been able to work out His own purpose in us, and to reveal His Son in us, then may it one day come to our turn to exclaim with St. Paul, "I have finished my course." 3. Fellowship in the result of His sufferings. He, the Captain of our salvation, was made "perfect through suffering." Even so, while there never was a time that the will of the Man Christ Jesus was opposed to the will of the Father, yet there was a time when its obedience was not completed, and thus He learnt obedience by the things which He suffered. If we learn what it is to be conformed to the image of His death, as our wilfulness and waywardness learn to submit themselves to the gentle discipline of suffering, and if in each fresh cross we find a fresh revelation of the loving will of the Father, how calm, how resurrection-like our lives must needs become! (*W. M. H. H. Aitken, M.A.*) *The fellowship of Christ's sufferings*:—I. THERE ARE SENSES IN WHICH WE CAN HAVE NO COMMUNITY WITH OUR LORD IN HIS SUFFERINGS. 1. They were distinct in kind from ours. (1) They were meritorious, whereas we can never have any merit in God's sight. (2) Voluntary, whereas all ours are deserved being entailed by sin. 2. They were distinct in degree. (1) In all their bitterness they were foreseen, whereas ours are hidden, and come in drops only. (2) In absolute magnitude. He bore the whole burden of human suffering. Our sympathies are mighty, but the facts on which they are founded, and the persons they concern, are limited. (3) In capacity for suffering He surpassed us. It is a token of God's mercy as well as our infirmity that we are benumbed by pain. The crash which lights on a man and maims him, leaves him feeling for a moment unhurt. And so with great mental suffering. Often in the course of mighty calamities the chief sufferer endures less than those who pity him. But when in the depth of the valley of humiliation Christ was ever awake to each particular of His great load of woe, and when they offered Him the stupefying potion He put it from Him. (4) In the matter and form and nature of His suffering He surpassed us. What was it that wrung that "My soul is exceeding sorrowful." Was it the mere prospect of pain and shame? Can we suppose that that courage which has often borne on the sons of men to torture and ignominy, foreseen and chosen, was not present in Him? No. Death had a sting, but it was not pain, nor shame; it was sin. II. BUT HERE WE TOUCH A POINT WHERE WE MAY ENTER INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS. If He became sin for us we are the sinners. Imputed guilt crushed Him; shall actual guilt bring to us no similar suffering? Of this the natural man knows nothing. Terror on account of sin may throw over his soul its dark shadow, but this is not fellowship with Christ's sufferings. 1. Whence, then, does this fellowship date? When first the Holy Spirit convicts of the hatefulness of sin. 2. This fellowship is an acquirement worthy of our highest ambition. We may avoid it, and live as we think a far more comfortable life. Shall we with the dread of death ever before us? Is it not worth while to get rid of this with all its grievous bondage? 3. The Christian should need no such argument, for the very purpose of his existence is to be conformed to Christ, but this he cannot be without the fellowship of His sufferings. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through them; so must we be. (*Dean Alford.*) *The fellowship of Christ's sufferings*:—It seems an awful wish that any mortal should dare to aspire to share the sufferings of the Man of sorrows; stranger still when we remember the actual sufferings of that mortal; stranger still that He should tell us to wish it for ourselves. I. THE NATURE OF THIS FELLOWSHIP. 1. It is not any imitation of Christ's sufferings. Paul might have had them as had the impenitent thief, without any fellowship with Christ. We, too, may suffer beside Christ without suffering with Him. 2. The sufferings of Christ were peculiarly His own. Every heart knows its own bitterness. (1) We shall not find them in the outward circumstances of His life. There have been more painful lives and agonizing deaths than His. (2) We see their intensity in the fact that Christ's life was perfectly holy. He loved God perfectly in a world where God was not loved, where His law was broken, and His name defamed. And remember He saw iniquity as none else could see it; and yet He loved the men whose sin He loathed, and because He loved them He bore the awful burden of their sin. (3) In this our Lord's life followed a universal law. It is a law of organic life, that the lowest form of it has least power of suffering; the highest form of it most. The eye that is the quickest to see beauty is most pained by deformity; the ear that most loves harmony is most pained by discord. But give a spiritual eye that loves the beauty of holiness; a spiritual ear

that loves the harmony of righteousness, and place them in the midst of disorder and evil, and you have a nature that, just because it is perfect, must be sorrowful. 3. Now we see what is meant by this fellowship. Paul wished to be raised in the scale of being, and he knew that he could not have Christ's holiness without Christ's sadness, His grace without His grief. Such must be the law of our life. If we would come nearer Christ we must have His sufferings. You may escape them, but only by descending in the scale of being, just as a deaf man escapes the pain of discord, the palsied the pain of touch. 4. Is this a gloomy view of religion? Yes, to those who have mistaken what religion is, to the selfish, the cowardly, and the slothful, whose religion is only a device for getting to heaven as comfortably as they can. II. ITS REWARD. 1. Those who share the pains of Christ are entitled to His joys. The same capacity for pain that marks the highest nature also shows its capacity for pleasure. The joy of Christ was in the love He bore His Father, although that also made His grief. If He grieved that the world had not known His Father, it was joy to Him to gather those to whom He taught the Father's love. If it was grief to the Good Shepherd to see the sheep wandering, it was joy to bring it back to the fold. And for this joy He endured the cross. And it may be our joy to do likewise, and to have the brighter fellowship even in the meanness of your toil. 2. In every pain you endure for Christ there is a prophecy of the glory that you shall yet share with Christ. God has made nothing for pain. For every creature God has provided its proper element, and for every desire its lawful gratification. If, then, God has made a new creature in Christ Jesus, He has provided for it an element and gratification for its spiritual desires. The plant that struggles toward the light testifies that light is its proper element; the captive eagle that spreads its wings in vain testifies that its proper home is in the broad fields of air. And when the soul of the Christian pines for the light, and its wings of faith and hope spread themselves, unable to bear him to the home he loves, it is a certain proof that there is a light, a freedom, and a blessedness in the place our Lord has gone to prepare, and he welcomes the pain as preparing him for the place. (*Bishop Magee.*) *The fellowship of Christ's sufferings:*—I. IN WHAT RESPECTS A CHRISTIAN MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE SUFFERINGS OF HIS MASTER. 1. By comprehending their character, objects, and results. (1) Those who think of them as chiefly corporeal, or proceeding from the treatment of men, or from natural causes, cannot share this fellowship. The body was tortured, but "my soul is troubled." There was no cross in the garden; nor does the prospect of suffering explain the agony there; nor the endurance His cry. "God hath put Him to grief," and those who regard His sorrows as those of a martyr can have no fellowship with Him who was "wounded for our transgressions." (2) They who limit the effect of these sufferings to their moral influence can have no fellowship with Him. It is true that Christ has set all mourners an example; but "He also offered Himself without spot." God setting him forth as a propitiation is something distinct from setting us an example. (3) But the belief of this is not everything, notwithstanding what doctrinal Pharisees may say. The devils have it but are not better for it, and a man may be sound in his ideas about these things without caring an atom for them. 2. By faith in them as real and efficacious, and by appropriating their fruits to ourselves. When I feel and know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth me from sin I have the highest kind of this fellowship. I may not know all that God has revealed about the blood of Jesus, nor be able to satisfy a theologian, but just as I know that the sun gives me light, and food nourishment, so I may know that Christ's blood takes away sin. 3. By suffering as far as possible in His Spirit. There were sorrows into which we cannot follow Him, and His Spirit was so perfect that our imitation must be very imperfect. But we have fellowship thus: (1) The lowly born and despised disciple may have fellowship with the sufferings of Him whom sinners contemned because He was the carpenter's son. (2) The poor may have fellowship with Him who had not where to lay His head. (3) The hidden disciple, called to stand and wait, may have fellowship with Him who lived, with but one exception, in the seclusion of Nazareth for thirty years. (4) The tempted likewise. (5) The despised. (6) The forsaken. (7) The agonized; and (8) The dying. II. WHEREFORE IS THIS FELLOWSHIP DESIRABLE? 1. Our enjoyment of the everlasting benefits of Christ's sufferings is dependent on this fellowship. 2. It assists our comprehension of Christ's love. 3. We learn to value more highly what has been secured by Christ's suffering. 4. It tends to relieve the burden of our sorrows. 5. It extinguishes our love for the world. III. HOW MAY I ATTAIN

rt? Like Paul, you must count all things loss. Such knowledge requires much sacrifice. 1. If you pride yourself on your family you can have no fellowship with Him who endured contempt as the carpenter's son. 2. If your great aim is to be wealthy you can have no fellowship with the sufferings of Christ in His poverty. 3. If your object is applause, what communion can there be between you and "the despised and rejected of men"? (*S. Martin.*) *The fellowship of Christ's sufferings*.—I. IN RELATION TO PAIN. 1. The pains of life are as various as bodies and souls. Our sensibilities are very various; one thing hurts one person and another another; what is agony to me my neighbour scarcely feels. This is true of the roughnesses of life, its calumnies, its disappointments; of those trials which come through the affections, and those which come through the ambitions of our nature. And those to whom sorrow does not come go in quest of it; they have self-made troubles as hard to endure as those God sends. Nay, there is this compensation, that real suffering drives out imaginary, and where the lot is that of want or anguish the distresses of mere sentiment are excluded. But no Christian escapes distress of some kind. 2. But in all this there is lacking as yet the essential feature of a fellowship in Christ's sufferings. For this faith is needful, and devotion, submission, the support of a heavenly arm, and the expectation of a heavenly home. St. Paul's life was Christ. All his desires, interests, objects, were swallowed up in the living to Christ's glory. It was in this sort of life that trouble met Him (2 Cor. vi. 5). What becomes of us when we drag ourselves into this comparison. But if we suffer no great things on Christ's behalf, let us see at least that common life is lived in remembrance of Him, life's pleasures subordinated to His will, life's anxieties, sorrows, sicknesses, endured patiently in His strength. II. IN RELATION TO SIN. In the highest sense we cannot share Christ's sufferings, and, thank God, need not. He has done all. We can add nothing. But that conflict with sin, with its assaults, wiles, contradictions, and perversenesses, temptations which He waged, every one of His servants must have his share, and that conflict means suffering, as every man who has had to do battle with a besetting sin will bear witness. He carries its scars yet, and will carry them to his grave. As Christ, the Captain of our salvation, resisted unto blood, striving against sin, so must we, and in the midst of the conflict remember that He is with you (1 John iv. 4; 2 Kings vi. 15-17). (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Christ suffering in His members*.—Some two hundred years ago, there was a dark period of suffering in Scotland, when deeds of bloody cruelty were committed on God's people, not outdone by Indian butcheries. One day the tide is flowing in Solway Firth, rushing like a race horse with snowy mane to the shore. It is occupied by groups of weeping spectators. They keep their eyes fixed on two objects out upon the wet sands. There, two women, each tied fast by their arms and limbs to a stake, stand within the sea mark; and many an earnest prayer is going up to heaven that Christ who bends from His throne to the sight would help them now in their dreadful hour of need. The elder of the two is staked furthest out. Margaret, the younger martyr, stands bound, a fair sacrifice, near by the shore. Well, on the big billows come, hissing to their naked feet; on, and further on they come, death riding on the top of the waves, and eyed by these tender women with unflinching courage. The waters rise and rise, till, amid a scream and cry of horror from the shore, the lessening form of her that had death first to face, is lost in the foam of the surging wave. It recedes, but only to return, and now, the sufferer gasping for breath, her death struggle is begun; and now for Margaret's trial, and her noble answer. "What see you yonder?" said their murderers as they pointed to her fellow confessor in the suffocating agonies of a protracted death. Response full of the boldest faith, and brightest hope; she firmly answered, "I see Christ suffering in one of His own members." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The fellowship of Christ's sufferings*.—A dear suffering Christian on a bed of sickness, which has now proved the portal of heaven, shrank for a while from the prospect of prolonged anguish which opened before her. In the vision of the morning there appeared to her a minute crown twined here and there with thorns, and by the side of this tiny ensign of the Saviour's deep, abounding love, lay another crown, composed wholly of thorns, large murderous spines, such as doubtless composed the wreath of painful mockery that bound the brow of the Son of God. "I thought," said she, "the angels might have brought it; for some one seemed to say, pointing to the large heavy crown, 'I wore this for thee; wear thine for Me,' and meekly she bent her head, and wore the wreath, and now she has laid it by for the crown which she wears. (*Anna Shipton.*) *Sweetness of fellowship with Christ*.—Oh! how sweet a cross it is to

see a cross betwixt Christ and us; to hear our Redeemer say, at every sigh, and every blow, and every loss of a believer, "Half mine!" (*S. Rutherford.*) *Fellowship with Christ's suffering*:—An intimate friend of Handel's called upon him just as he was in the middle of setting the words of "He was despised" to music, and found the great composer sobbing with tears, so greatly had this passage and the rest of his morning's work affected the master. (*Musical Anecdotes.*) *Vicarious suffering common*:—Suffering in human life is very widely vicarious. Every man feels this in himself; one part of his being paying another's penalty. If he loves overmuch, it is not love that suffers, but conscientiousness. If his passions are unduly excited, it is his moral nature that feels the transgression. If the brain be overwrought, the body feels it. The first lesson of life is one of vicarious suffering. As we go to the ship to see friends depart, and leave them with cheers and benedictions, and waived kisses; so, when a young spirit is about to be launched into this earthly life, one would think that troops of angels would attend it, and with hope and gladness see it on its way. But no. Silently it passes the bounds of the unseen land; and the gate which opens to admit it to this is a gate of tears and moans. Through the sorrow of another is it ushered into existence. Love cannot clasp all it yearns for in its bosom, without first suffering for it. The child lives upon its parent's life. The child which has no one to suffer for it is a miserable wretch. And from this point onward, in every relation of life, one man suffers for another's benefit. It is the law of social life; and I do not see why we should think it strange that Christ obeyed the same law, only in a grander way. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Fellowship with suffering longed for*:—Thuanus tells, that a Gallic lord being led forth to martyrdom in company with some equally faithful, though plebeian professors, saw that out of regard to his rank the officers put on him no chains, while each of his brethren bore them; upon which he cried, "Let me, I pray you, be clipped of none of my honours; I, too, for love of Jesus, would wear a chain!" (*S. Coley.*) *Being made conformable unto His death*.—The death of Christ is presented to us in three different lights. 1. As the noblest expression of Divine love for man; as the infinitely meritorious price of our redemption; as the only safe ground of a trembling sinner's hope. 2. As the strongest and most endearing motive to holiness of life—"constraining us." 3. As a suitable pattern for imitation, which is the meaning here. I. LET US ANALYSE THIS EMINENTLY DISTINGUISHING FEATURE OF CHRISTIAN ATTAINMENT. There is conformity—1. To the principles involved in the Saviour's death. It was not merely an affecting and mysterious historical event. It represents the principles which lie at the foundation of God's moral character and government, and are most vitally connected with man's hopes as a guilty and helpless being. (1) These principles are—(a) That Jehovah is a just and holy Being, and that evil cannot dwell with Him. (b) That the Divine administration implies the punishment of sin as well as the reward of righteousness. (c) That the moral law of God is a transcript of His own character, and as such, must be vindicated in all its honours and claims. (d) That God has an unalterable right to the obedience of His creatures. (e) That satisfaction must be given to the demands of the perfect law before transgressors can be admitted to mercy. (f) That without shedding of blood is no remission of sins. (2) To these principles the mind of the believer must and will be conformed. (a) He acquiesces in them as essential and worthy of God. (b) He looks on man as a guilty being and on God as a righteous judge. (c) He adores and admires the holiness as well as the love of Jehovah. (d) He contemplates with delight at the foot of the Cross the harmony of the Divine attributes. (e) And in opposition to the infidel who derides the scheme, the Socinian who extracts from it all its value, the Pharisee who seeks to achieve a salvation for himself, he exclaims, "God forbid" (Gal. vi. 16; 1 Cor. ii. 2). 2. In the motives which prompted to it. (1) Love to God and man; the former because God's honour required vindication; the latter because man needed mercy. This love, of course, passeth knowledge, and in a sense cannot be imitated; but still in the experience of its benefits we may be conformed to it and cherish a corresponding feeling towards God and man, by giving to our Creator and Redeemer the highest place in our affections and service, and by devoting ourselves to the welfare of mankind. (2) A holy desire to glorify God in the destruction of sin and the advancement of universal holiness. We are conformed to this when the Divine glory is the end of all our actions, and when we wage war against sin. 3. In the ends for which He died. (1) As a witness for truth; and we must conform ourselves to this by acknowledging the reality and Divine original of truth thus attested. (2) To expiate the guilt of sin; to conform to this we must repent,

believe, and accept His salvation fully, and seek the salvation of others. 4. In the temper and spirit of His death. He suffered—(1) Voluntarily and cheerfully—do we suffer willingly? (2) With patience and resignation—are we stubborn? (3) With meek benevolence—are we revengeful? (4) In the exercise of lively faith—do we give way to despair? II. We shall deduce from the subject those ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SCHEME OF PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY IT IS FITTED TO UNFOLD. We have an illustration of—1. The practical character of the doctrine of the atonement. Having for one of its main objects deliverance from the power of sin and the promotion of universal holiness, it is fitted to cherish a love of practical godliness. 2. The inseparable connection between faith and holiness. Without faith, the principles and motives which most powerfully prompt to holiness could not gain access to the mind: without holiness, there can be no genuine faith, for the graces of holiness are its effects and fruits. 3. The subject enters deeply into the essentials of Christian experience and life. Religion does not consist in the use of means; the ordinances of religion are only the means of leading the soul to God and holiness, of being conformable to Christ's death. (*R. Burns, D.D.*) *Conformity to Christ's death*:—The participle "being made" is present, and implies a process that is going on and will continue through life—not an act like justification, simultaneous with the exercise of faith. "Made conformable" means being cast in the same form, being brought into such a community and likeness that one sketch, outline, shape, will represent both. I. THIS SHAPING IN THE FORM OF CHRIST'S DEATH IS ONE OF THE CHRISTIAN'S EARNEST ENDEAVOURS AND MOST CHERISHED OBJECTS. No advantage in life, nothing that tempts ordinary men can attract Him in comparison of this. Here is a text for us to try ourselves by. What is the shape that we must be like. Christ's death was a death unto sin. "In that He died He died unto sin." The suffering of the previous verse is a different thing from this, yet it co-exists with this in the spiritual life. Fellowship with Christ's sufferings is the endless conflict of the believer's course, ever wearing and wearying Him. Conformity to Christ's death is the deep calm of indifference to sin with all its allurements, ever setting in together with and over against the conflict. The two are in different portions of His being. The conflict with sin is carried on at the surface, and also very much beneath the surface—even in the region where the two wills, the old and the new, are ever struggling and wrestling for the mastery; and sometimes its more terrible paroxysms seem to penetrate, and shake, and threaten to carry away the whole man: but there is an inner depth, in which the peace which passeth understanding has its hold and reign: and there, in that centre of his being, is this death to sin going on. As Christ died to sin, passed out from the penalty and imputation of sin, He had no more to do with it. So each of the brethren who are being made like Him are losing part and interest in sin, weaned from its power, alienated from its motives and objects; the distance ever widening between it and them; the breach becoming ever more and more irreconcilable. II. THE METHOD BY WHICH THIS IS BROUGHT ABOUT. 1. Not by any mere strong action of the will—any acquired philosophical indifference to sin and temptation. Sin is too strong for any resolve. 2. No; in our Christian life, Christ is first and midst and last: and no mere moral strength or determination can be reckoned on as accessory to Him in his great work. This being conformed to Christ's death is brought in, is carried on, is completed, by faith. When I first see Christ linked to me by the bonds of God's everlasting covenant, then faith begins its work within me; then, the first utter dislike to sin, as sin, is bred in my heart. 3. But faith in what? In Christ's death, in its atoning efficacy and its necessity. Then alone does sin appear in its proper hatefulness when I see that this was what helped to nail Him there; when I enter into my Redeemer's woe and understand what it was that caused it. I become knit to Him and weaned from it—crucified with Him, so that though the motions towards it are yet felt in my body, yet I have no disposition in its favour. III. LET US FOLLOW OUT THIS CONFORMITY INTO SOME OF ITS ATTENDANT CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. We have seen it in its total severance from sin and sinners. But where were they meantime? Did they rest quiet? Did they allow this everlasting protest against the pollution, the selfishness, the hatefulness of sin before God, to be lifted up in peace? Ah no: there they were beneath His cross, scoffing at Him and aggravating His death-pangs. And so it will be with us. Sin and the devil will not let us alone in its various stages. The nearer we approach in likeness to Him, the more will His enemies treat us as they treated Him. No longer by the scourge, and the crown of thorns, and the cross—but by mockery and scorn

by coldness and alienation, which in our present state of ripened social order are weapons as powerful as any outward persecution was then. 2. He died to all human ambition. Whatever projects His followers may have formed for Him were defeated by it. Just so thy fondly cherished hopes of earthly distinction must be laid down at the foot of His cross; thou must be content, so far as they are concerned, to be stripped and nailed to the cross of shame, and made a spectacle to men. 3. All self-righteousness is nailed to the cross, His was the only meritorious death. If I am being conformed to it I am nothing; nothing as ground of hope, or as cause of fear. 4. Nor should we entirely dismiss such a theme without one look onwards. "If we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with Him." The Christian should never end with Calvary, nor with the mortification of the body, nor with deadness to sin; but ever carry his thoughts onward to that blessed consummation, to which these are the entrance and necessary conditions. (*Dean Alford.*) *The martyr spirit*:—A Chinese convert, when trying to persuade his countrymen to give up their idols and believe in Christ, was ridiculed and scorned, and at last pelted with mud and stones till his face was red with the blood that flowed from the cuts in his temples. Mr. Johnson, the missionary, meeting him, said, "You have had bad treatment to-day." He smilingly replied, "They may kill me if they will love Jesus."

Ver. 11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.—St. Paul in the context reckoneth up his gain by Christ—viz., his justification and sanctification; but his gain reacheth further, even to glorious resurrection. I. THE BENEFIT TO BE OBTAINED BY CHRIST. How is this a privilege since there is a resurrection of the wicked? (Acts xxiv. 15). But theirs is one to condemnation (John v. 29), and so a fall rather than a rising. Therefore the faithful are only called the Children of the Resurrection (Luke xx. 36). The word here is not *ἀνάστασις*, but *ἐξανάστασις*, to express the full and blessed resurrection that no evil shall follow (Luke xiv. 14). II. THE SUBMISSION OF A SELF-DENYING BELIEVER TO USE ANY MEANS TO OBTAIN IT. The words seem to express a doubtfulness, but indeed they do not (2 Cor. v. 1), for there is no uncertainty in God's promise. Why doth he then thus express himself? 1. To intimate the difficulty, thereby to quicken his desire and diligence. 2. To express the variety of the means by which God bringeth His people to glory (ver. 10). 3. To set forth his full submission (Luke xiv. 26). 4. His unwearied diligence and earnest endeavour to obtain this happiness, whatever it cost him. 5. The value of this benefit, and his vehement desire to attain it. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) The doctrine here taught is that the blessedness of the saints at the resurrection is so great that we should be content to use any means and run any hazards to attain it. I. WHAT IS THE HAPPINESS OF THE SAINTS IN THAT DAY. 1. Our personal inherent blessedness is glory revealed in us (Rom. viii. 18). (1) The body hath its felicity. (a) Because the man cannot be happy till the body be raised again. The soul alone doth not constitute human nature. (b) It is agreeable to the wisdom and goodness of God that the body which had its share in the work should share the reward. (c) The estate of those who die will not be worse than that of those who are only changed at Christ's coming, or there would be a disparity. (d) In the heavenly state there are objects which can only be discerned by the bodily senses—the human nature of Christ, e.g. (e) As Christ was taken to heaven bodily, so shall we, for we bear the image of the heavenly one (ver. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 42–44). (2) For the happiness of the soul. We shall be satisfied with the vision of God and transformed into His likeness (1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 John iii. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 18). 2. Adherent privileges. (1) Justification. We have that now by faith; then we shall have our absolution from the Judge's mouth. (2) Adoption. We have that light now (John i. 12)—then the full fruition thereof (Rom. viii. 23). (3) Redemption. That day is called "the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30), because then we are completely delivered from all misery, both of soul and body (Eph. i. 14). II. THE MEANS WHEREBY GOD BRINGETH US THITHER. 1. The way of our holiness and the active part of our obedience. (1) Dying to sin (Rom. viii. 13; Gal. vi. 8). (2) Living to God. The spiritual life is heaven begun (2 Pet. iii. 14; Luke xxi. 36; Acts xxiv. 15–16). 2. As to passive obedience observe—(1) That no suffering must be excepted out of our resignation (Matt. xvi. 25; Luke xiv. 26). (2) This must be endured cheerfully. III. THE REASON WHY, RATHER THEN FAIL, WE MUST SUBMIT TO ANY MEANS WHICH GOD HATH APPOINTED. 1. From the absolute dominion and prerogative of God, both to make laws and to put us on what trials He pleaseth to appoint. 2. From the goodness and suitable-

ness of His laws. (1) There is wisdom in them. (2) We have no reason to be discouraged, for Divine help is assured (2 Tim. iv. 17-18). (3) The Divine comfort is to be had (1 Pet. iv. 14; Rom. v. 5). 3. The great difficulty lieth not in a respect of the end, but the means; and so the trial of our sincerity must be rather looked for there. 4. The hope propounded will bear this submission. Immortal happiness is most durable, and endless misery most terrible; the world is vanity, heaven real. (*Ibid.*)

The resurrection.—I. THERE IS A HAPPY ESTATE HEREAFTER WHICH BEGINS WITH THE RESURRECTION. More happy than that which Adam lost or from which the angels fell. II. THE BEGINNING OF THIS HAPPY ESTATE IS AT THE RESURRECTION. 1. All good shall be perfected. 2. All evil cease. 3. Body as well as soul, perfected being, shall enjoy the fulness of the one and immunity from the other. III. THE APOSTLE MAKES THE RESURRECTION THE LAST THING, THEREBY ESTABLISHING AN ORDER (Luke xxiv. 26; 2 Tim. ii. 12). Calvary comes before Olivet in the experience of both Christ and His people. IV. IT IS HARD TO COME TO HEAVEN BECAUSE OF THIS DIVINE ORDER. 1. Away then with all idle and secure thoughts of sparing ourselves. We must come to health by physic. 2. In all crosses let us not look into the state we are in so much as that we are going to. We are going to a palace and should not be dejected because of the narrowness of the way (Heb. xii. 21). 3. Labour for a right esteem of the things of this world. They are momentary and fading. 4. Labour to strengthen our graces. (1) Faith to assure us that we are God's children, and have heaven laid up for us. (2) Hope which makes us cheerfully endure in expectation of what faith believes. (3) Love to Christ which made Paul desire to be with Him which was best of all (chap. i. 23). (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*)

The resurrection (ἐξανάστασις) of the saints.—I. IS DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT OF THE WICKED—by its glory (ver. 21). Dan. xii. 2.—By its precedence (1 Thess. iv. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 23). Rev. xx. 5.—By its results (John v. 29). II. IS AN OBJECT OF CHRISTIAN ambition—requiring faith—consecration—effort. III. WILL AMPLY REPAY EVERY SACRIFICE—of self-gratification—earthly advantage—life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

The resurrection of the just.—No one could be more convinced than Paul of the blessedness in which the saint enters at death, and he was wonderfully qualified by visions and revelations to entertain this conviction. Yet he sets his heart upon that which could only be remote. What, then, must be that sequel which can fix and overwhelm such a mind, that while an instantaneous heaven lies before it, is transported beyond it to splendours which it agonizes to "attain"? I. WHAT IS THAT ENTIRE SATISFACTION AND CLIMAX FOR WHICH THE TEXT TEACHES US TO LONG AND LABOUR. Immortality as an idea was not unknown to the pagans, but the resurrection is the almost exclusive doctrine of Scripture. 1. That resurrection will be simultaneous, and the judgment of all will immediately succeed it. 2. Yet it is not unnatural that this common event should sometimes be specially regarded and personally applied. In the language of Paul to the Corinthians it is argued in the case of believers from their union with Christ. He mentions not the wicked who shall rise for different reasons. They could never wish to attain the resurrection. The first resurrection (1 Thess. iv. 15) is shared by the dead over those who have never died, and that of Rev. xx. 6, is of souls. 3. St. Paul desired but a share in the general resurrection, attended as that event would be to him and all the people of God with consequences of surpassing happiness and glory. 4. Yet searching the experience of present Christians we do not find this hope ardently cherished. Thousands are contented with the salvation and glorification of the soul; this is to be deplored as the slight of a matchless good. Apart from the resurrection man is incomplete. II. WHAT ARE THE SCRIPTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF ITS ACCOMPANIMENTS AND CONSEQUENCES. 1. The mutual recognition of saints in heaven. Is violence to be done to memory, and can love be changed? Can a spirit made perfect be wanting in sympathies which so much purified it from imperfection? 2. The happiness of our future condition is made chiefly to depend on our resemblance to Christ. 3. There the saints shall be fully acknowledged. They who here were unknown and hated shall there shine forth as the sun. 4. Christians shall be glorified with their Master. 5. We therefore find the righteous in Scripture earnestly seeking and exultantly hailing this resurrection. Why? Because—(1) It is the triumph of Christ. (2) The full redemption of the believer. (3) The restitution of our entire nature. (4) Purposes will then be indicated which our present mixed being has not hitherto revealed, for both mind and body; the latter will then be a perfect instrument for the soul. (5) A congeniality will be established between the risen saints and the materialism of their glorious abode. (6) In the reintegration of our manhood shall be displayed the most perfect spectacle of

the beauty of holiness. (7) There will be endless progression. III. WHAT ARE THE DETERMINATIONS BY WHICH IT IS TO BE WON. The manner or method supposes far higher means than those we can command. The "power of the resurrection" alone secures our confidence. The "means," however, in this connection, refer not to the causative but the moral; to the influence of present character and conduct on this event. We often mark the influence of former conduct on our present condition; and so we exist and act for all the future of our immortality. 1. What prayer, then, should we devote to this attainment? 2. What anticipation should familiarize it? 3. What preparation should facilitate it? "Mortify therefore your members." 4. What counterpart should we exhibit of it. (R. W. Hamilton, D.D.) *The attainment of the resurrection*:—I. PAUL'S AIM. How can that future rising be attained at all by man's effort in time? 1. Paul has been speaking of a spiritual fellowship with Christ's sufferings and death and rising, and then as a direct result he passes to this, from which we infer that the resurrection in the future is the result of man's spiritual life in the present. Men fancy that the future glory of the risen Christian is by a kind of miracle suddenly added beyond the grave. Paul regards it as a glory daily growing now, to be manifested then. It is an outgrowth of fellowship with Christ, and its blessedness will be greater or less according to the perfection of that fellowship. 2. In what manner was this Christian life a constant attainment of the resurrection? The "power of Christ's resurrection" is the influence in the soul which renders its life a gradual growth towards the rising glory of man. (1) The risen Christ is the pledge of a risen life. Christ did not rise merely to prove our immortality; if that were all its meaning it would only deepen man's fear. We do not want immortality unless we know that our life, throwing off its sins, shall rise upwards to God. Rising to God Christ showed that man is accepted by the Father, rising in the human, He showed how, through Him, human life should rise into life Divine. (2) The rising of Christ is a power to elevate life. We have fellowship not with the past, but with the living Jesus: we are moulded by the power not only of a dying Saviour, but of the living friend. He carries our sympathies upwards with Himself to God and the spiritual world. (3) Hence arises the gradual attainment of the resurrection, every experience of our risen life makes us feel the necessity of the future; yet every experience is an actual attaining of that future. II. PAUL'S ENDEAVOUR. The necessity of this agonizing endeavour arises from two facts. 1. The difficulty of accomplishing it. This is so—(1) Because our souls are subject to the influences of three great worlds. (a) By its fascinations this old earth appeals to our hearts, and seems by many arms to bind us to itself as our home. (b) The dark world of unbelief and indifference awakening the carnal nature renders the Christian life an inevitable struggle. (c) At the same time through the love of God and the Cross of Christ heaven is attracting the soul. (2) Because of the incessant and dominant power of our easily besetting sin. This power arises largely in that every man thinks his own weakness small and insignificant. (3) And then listen to Paul after his high attainments telling us that he has to keep his body under lest he should be a castaway. 2. The glory of its attainment. You know how this raised Paul to exertion. He moved onwards to eternity under the constant influence of its attraction. Alas! how feebly we feel this as a motive for endeavour. We lash ourselves into exertion by fear, when we might be so cheered into it by sweet hope as to become unconscious of toil. (E. L. Hull, B.A.) *The attainment of the resurrection dependent on fellowship with Christ*:—Just as the perfect beauty of the flower lies dormant in the seed, and through its burial in the cold earth is invisibly developing itself, to bloom forth at the voice of spring, so the perfect beauty of the resurrection is hidden in the Christian now; and, by all his toil and struggle, that germ of glory is growing. Just as the mental power and strong determined will of the man are hidden in the child, and are maturing unconsciously through all the wonder of its infancy, so the resurrection manhood of the soul is lying in it during this childhood of Time; and by the education of fellowship with Christ, and struggle to be Christ-like, is advancing to its final splendour. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 12-14. Not as though I had already attained.—I. THE IMPERFECTION OF OUR ATTAINMENTS. II. THE GRANDEUR OF OUR CALLING. III. THE NECESSITY OF EFFORT. IV. THE PROSPECT OF REWARD. (J. Lyth, D.D.) *Failure and progress*:—1. It is a painful feeling to look back on life and feel that a great object is unaccomplished. The philosopher has this, who in spite of brilliant prospects finds after hard effort the problems of life to be insoluble. The would-be liberator

of an oppressed nation feels the same when, after vast expenditure of time and money and suffering, he dies with a tyrant on the throne and the people no better for freedom than when he began. The Christian's feeling is even more painful, when he measures what he has done with what he might or ought to have done.

2. This, too, has to be observed of the Christian that, as he advances in the Christian course, his standard of perfection rises, and what once satisfied him now fails to do so. 3. The feeling of not having attained is also disheartening. Is the past to be the criterion of the future? 4. The feeling is deepened by the thought of all the struggle and strife to attain perfection, and all seemingly to little purpose. And soon he must meet the Great Judge who, however merciful, commands him to be perfect. 5. The apostle withdraws our attention from this feeling about the past to the future.

I. IT IS NOT A HEALTHY THING TO BROOD OVER PAST SIN. 1. There is such a thing as disturbing the balance between the two parts of repentance, sorrow for sin and active obedience. (1) Sorrow for sin is foundation work. Should a man be employed all his life in laying foundations? (2) It is subordinate work, for it has no value apart from its action on character. 2. Brooding over the past has a dangerous influence on character, and has a tendency to remorse or despair. 3. The natural course is from sorrow to pass to obedience, remembering gospel provisions and motives. II. I MUST NOT INFER WHAT MY RELIGIOUS FUTURE WILL BE FROM THE PAST. The doctrine of probabilities is a very good one to go upon in worldly matters, wherever a permanent law prevails. Here the rule would be "remembering" the things behind, &c. But there are factors in the spiritual life which can change the face of things. To say that it is improbable that the Spirit will give you more strength hereafter than now would be an impious restraint on the action of the freest of Beings. Such a habit, moreover, is destructive of faith and hope. Forget the past and believe that it is possible for you to grow faster in goodness in one year than you have grown in ten; and that there are resources inconceivably great within your reach. III. WE MUST NOT REMEMBER THE PAST AS OUR STANDARD OF ACTION OR CHARACTER. Here we must draw a distinction. The man who is conscious of high purposes running through the web of life may be glad, as he takes his reviews of by-gone days, that the grace of God has enabled him to live on the whole near to the level of Christian principles—but there must ever be a discontent with themselves in the minds of Christians. And he may well suspect himself of declension or something more who is content to live as he has lived. Hence to forget the past and to remember it in order to avoid its evils are the same thing. IV. THE SOUL MUST BE SO OCCUPIED WITH THE FUTURE THAT THE PAST SHALL ONLY BE SUBORDINATE AND SUBSIDIARY. If I have been in wretchedness the remembrance is of no account except to help me to escape from it. If I have been poor exertion to gain is the main thing. Whatever the past, the Christian's future has in it possibilities almost infinite. (*Pres. Woolsey.*)

Aspiration.—I. THE GOAL AT WHICH THE APOSTLE AIMED WAS MORAL PERFECTION. No man can define this moral perfection; but let no man object on that account. All the grandest things defy definition. Music, the perfection of sound; beauty, the perfection of form and colour; poetry, the perfection of thought—no one can define these, nor can any one the music, beauty, and poetry of our highest nature and life. II. THE APOSTLE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT HE HAS NOT REACHED THIS PERFECTION. 1. Are we to understand that Paul felt unsubdued pride, selfishness, &c. No. That which is not perfect is imperfect; but sin is not imperfection; it is contradiction. The contradictory element was destroyed, but imperfection remained, the normal elements of his nature had not attained their fulness and strength and beauty. 2. Who of us has attained? We are told of young people who have "finished their education." Think of having finished ones education with a world like this about us! Much more in the things of Christ. III. THE APOSTLE TELLS US WHAT HE DOES TO ATTAIN THAT MORAL PERFECTION WHICH IS THE PRIZE OF VICTORY. "One thing I do," &c. Scientists tell us of arrested developements in nature, but instances of that in spiritual life are more numerous. This is to a large extent because men are trammelled by the things behind. 1. There are the restrictions of habit. Terrible is the peril of routine, the benumbing influence of familiarity and commonplace. We must break away from this. 2. The discouragements of failure. Here the waters of forgetfulness are the waters of life. We are saved by hope, not by memory. 3. The tyranny of success. The success of many musicians, artists, preachers, masters, &c., contents them, and instead of being an inspiration is a stultification. (*W. L. Watkinson.*)

Paul's ideal of life.—The whole doctrine of the Christian ideal is contained in this section of apostolic experience. An ideal is

sometimes called a standard, and so, in some sense, it is; but a standard is something measured, whereas an ideal is changeable, ever mounting higher and higher. Men do not go on a journey or build a house aimlessly, much less should they live aimlessly. They should set before them a distinct idea of character. We call it an ideal because it proceeds from the faculty of ideality or imagination, and presents all subjects in their perfectness. It is a glorious element in the human mind, for there is so much to draw men down from what is noble. And an ideal should always run far beyond realization. The man whose standard is far beneath his power must inevitably go down. **I. THERE ARE THREE CLASSES OF MEN.** 1. Those who have no ideal whatever. They are born Hottentots and they remain so. If they are born into mechanical life mechanics they remain. These have food and raiment, and, being fired with no inspiration, they are contented. 2. There are those who have an ideal which is pure romancing. They are simple dreamers. They imagine themselves to be now a warrior, now an artist, now an orator, and fill up the hour of their dream with the fancied dignity. These things have no relation to practical life; on the contrary they come back with less nerve and a greater inclination to avoid the burdens of life. 3. There are those who have a clear conception of the possibilities of human development, and who bring enough of reason with their imagination to give definiteness and purpose to their ideals. In this class we should seek to be found. **II. THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF IDEALS.** 1. Those which respect the external, secular condition of men. There are those who say, "I will not be a second workman to any man." Their ideal lies in their trade. The ideal of others consists in being rich, or high up in society. These things are not wrong, if they are parts of a comprehensive scheme that includes everything—body and soul. It is better to have these as ideals than to be aimless. But it is imperfect and may be ruinous. A man may sacrifice his own life and moral well-being for the purpose of pouring molten gold into his children's throats that destroys him in making and then in taking. 2. There are those who rise higher and take in an ideal which includes secular character as well as secular condition; who propose to be honoured among men; some by art, some by literature, some by statesmanship, &c. They intend to be respected for integrity and known for power. But these aim at character only as a thing within the bounds of time, and necessarily dwarf themselves. For man is a creature of two worlds, and in this he is at his least estate. 3. Others include the whole manhood for both worlds—the apostle's ideal. He substantially declared, "Nothing is done while anything remains undone." "Not as though I had attained." **III. THIS DELINEATES THE NOBLEST FORM OF AMBITION AND THE NOBLEST IDEAL OF LIFE.** Life is transformed by it. 1. Such an ideal unites and harmonizes life and redeems it from being a mere series of disconnected experiences and passages. 2. It stimulates and inspires the soul. A man may have no motive to life who merely has an ideal of wealth or ambition when these become impossible to him. You cannot make a man like Paul bankrupt. He has still, when all is gone, a house not made with hands. 3. It redeems men from indolence. 4. It is the cure for conceit. 5. It maintains spring and enterprise to the end of life, and fires men up at the very last with solemn purposes and noble resolves. Conclusion: Avoid one rock which is fatal to nobility. Because you have broken your purpose don't let it go unmended; when you have failed to reach your ideal don't despair but try again. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The ideal and the actual:—I. THE IDEAL OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHARACTER.* St. Paul was a most ambitious man, but his aim was to be something. So his ideal was personal, not something wrought out or imagined or embodied in a system or a creed. He wanted to be like Christ. That for him was perfection. **II. THE APOSTLE HAD NOT REACHED HIS MARK.** 1. He had a consciousness of incompleteness which was forced upon him by a variety of experiences. (1) His particular form of ambition—being as distinct from having—which, connected with Christ, was an egoism which promoted true humility. Hence he was keenly alive to his imperfections. (2) His sense of limitations. The feeling would be forced upon him that he was capable of better things. 2. All this has its lessons. (1) It gives us heart for ourselves and courage in our work for others. (2) It rebukes self-satisfaction and complacency. (3) It teaches us to recognize Christian character below perfection, and to cultivate charity for the imperfect. **III. BUT IT WAS THE FIXED PRACTICAL PURPOSE OF HIS LIFE TO REACH IT.** Did he do nothing beside? Nothing. He did indeed many things, but the many made one. And had he been a Manchester man he would so have bought and sold, &c., that in doing it he would have been doing the one thing. **IV. HIS METHOD OF PROGRESS.** 1. Forgetfulness of things which

belong to immature and unripened states. 2. A gathering up of the totality of nature into purpose and effort. (*W. Hubbard.*) *Few believers perfect here:—*When Allston died he left many pictures which were mostly sketches, yet with here and there a part finished up with wonderful beauty. So I think Christians go to heaven with their virtues mostly in outline, only here and there a part completed. But “that which is in part shall be done away,” and God shall finish the pictures in His own forms and colours. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Aim at perfection.*—I. THE

NEED OF IT. Our actual attainments are small—we have much to learn and experience. II. THE MEANS. A humble estimate of ourselves—leaving the things behind and reaching to those that are before—pressing to the goal. III. THE INCENTIVE. We would be perfect (see Barnes). In non-essentials we may differ, and God will in due time set us right—but in this we must have one rule and one mind. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian progress:—*I. WHEREIN WE MAY MAKE PROGRESS. 1.

In our views of the excellence of religion. 2. In our love to God and Christ. 3. In holiness. 4. In heavenly-mindedness. II. THE NECESSITY OF THIS PROGRESS. This is seen—1. In the frequency with which the Christian life is compared to a warfare and a race. 2. In the urgent commands of God. 3. In the nature of religion to which progress is indispensable. III. THE MEANS. 1. A firm belief that Divine influences may be obtained at all times, and to the full extent of our wants, by humble, earnest prayer. 2. Constant application to Divine ordinances. 3. A continual view of the Cross. 4. A constant vision of the prize. 5. A study of eminent examples. (*T. Craig.*) *The struggle for perfection:—*We go into a sculptor's studio, and there stands a block of marble on which the sculptor is working; the marble is all white and pure, yet the image is imperfect; the hand is beginning to beckon, the foot to move, thought is gathering on the brow, the lips seem as if they would soon speak, yet the statue is still imperfect; nothing faulty in the material, but it is not yet wrought into the fulness of the sculptor's ideal. So it was with the apostle; the vicious element was purged, but his deep soul had not yet been wrought into the fulness of the Divine ideal. He went out after larger measures, intenser experiences of love, power, light, fellowship, and blessedness, beyond all his past or present enjoyments. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Unrealized possibilities:—*You remember how the mightiest discoverer in natural science of modern times, Sir Isaac Newton, said, towards the close of his career, that he was but as a child who had gathered a few shells on the shores of an illimitable sea. He saw stretching before him a vast ocean of knowledge, which his life had been too short, which even his powers had been too weak, to explore. What he felt in things natural, St. Paul felt in things spiritual—that there were heights above him which he had never scaled, depths beneath him which he had never fathomed; that, rich as he was in Christ, there were yet hidden in that Lord treasures of wisdom and knowledge which would make him far richer still; that God was unsearchable, unfathomable, a shoreless sea, an ocean of perfections; of which he understood a little, of which he was understanding ever something more; but which man could no more take in than he could hold the sea and all its multitudinous waves in the hollow of his hand. Skirts of His glory St. Paul had seen, but not His train which filled the temple of the universe. Secrets of Christ's power he had known, who in this very Epistle declared, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;” and yet he felt that there was a power of Christ, transcending all which even he had known; and like some great earthly conqueror, who should esteem nothing won while anything remained to win, nothing accomplished while anything was yet possible to accomplish; who slighted, despised, trampled under foot all his old successes in the eager pursuit of new; even so this mighty spiritual athlete, this captain, commander, conqueror, leader of the hosts of the Lord, could not stay his steps, could not arrest his course. (*Alp. Trench.*) *More and yet more:—*You know what the general said when one of his officers rode up and cried, “Sir, we have taken a standard.” “Take another,” cried he. Another officer salutes him, and exclaims, “Sir, we have taken two guns.” “Take two more,” was the sole reply. This way lies the reward of holy service: you have done much; you shall do more. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *No retreat:—*It is said that at the battle of Alma, when one of the regiments was being beaten back by the Russians, the ensign in front stood his ground as the troops retreated. The captain shouted to him to bring back the colours. But the reply of the ensign was, “Bring up the men to the colours.” The dignity of Immanuel's ministry can never be lowered to meet our littleness. The men must come up to the colours. (*New Testament Anecdotes.*)

Ver. 12. Not as though I had attained, either were already perfect.—In these words we have—I. A DISCLAIMING OF PRESENT PERFECTION in two expressions. 1. “Not as though I had already attained.” This is an agonistical word for receiving the reward due to the conqueror. In the races there was a crown of leaves generally set over the goal, that the foremost might catch it, and carry it away with him (1 Cor. ix. 24; 1 Tim. vi. 12). 2. “Or were already perfect”—another agonistical word. Though the runner was to seize the crown as his right, yet the judges interposed before he could put it on his head, and when he received it from them he was adjudged a perfect racer or wrestler as the case might be. The word “perfect” was used—(1) Of their strength and agility, having passed the agonistical exercises (2 Cor. xiii. 9). (2) Of their reward. When the crown was adjudged them, or when they had done worthily, the more excellent had the more excellent rewards, which were called perfect crowns. II. AN EARNEST ENDEAVOUR FOR THE FUTURE. III. THE REASON OF HIS DILIGENCE. Christ’s apprehending is—1. In effectual calling, as He puts us upon this race, or inclineth us to it. 2. By constant support, for having apprehended us He still upholds us. (*T. Mantou, D.D.*) I. NONE OF GOD’S CHILDREN, HOWEVER ASSURED, CAN LOOK UPON THEMSELVES AS OUT OF DANGER TILL THEIR RACE BE ENDED. 1. God’s children may have assurance, as Paul had. This is the case—(1) When grace discovers itself in eminent self-denying acts, and is not a sleepy habit or a buried seed (1 Thess. i. 3). (2) When evidence is not blotted by frequent interruptions of the spiritual life by sin (2 Cor. i. 12). (3) Because they have the Spirit of adoption (Gal. iv. 6; Eph. i. 13–14). (4) They have a sense of the love of God and His rich mercies in Christ. (a) By acquaintance with Him (John xxii. 21). (b) By intercourse with Him (1 Peter ii. 3; Eph. iii. 12). (c) By the experiences of their afflictions (Rom. v. 3–5). (d) By present rewards of obedience (John xiv. 21, 23). (5) The change wrought is a sensible one and may be plainly discovered (Eph. v. 8). 2. God’s children cannot look upon themselves as past all care and holy solicitude. Reasons. (1) Because there is no period put to our duty but life. It is not enough to begin with God; we must go on in His way till we come home to Him (Heb. iii. 6, 14; vi. 11; Phil. ii. 12). (2) During our lives there is something more to suffer, some lust to conquer, some grace to strengthen. (3) Some have left their first love (Rev. ii. 4); have fainted in the race (Gal. v. 7). (4) The nature of civil assurance is to exclude fear, which hath torment; but not the fear of caution and diligence (Prov. xxviii. 14; 1 Peter i. 17). 3. Uses. (1) To show us the difference between carnal security and solid assurance. (a) There is a difference in the grounds; the one is a slight presumption of the end without the means, and the other goeth on solid evidences (1 John iii. 19). The one is sand, the other is rock. (b) They differ in effects; the one benumbeth the conscience into stupid peace; the other revives the conscience and fills it with joy and peace through believing (Rom. xv. 13; 2 Cor. i. 12; 1 Peter i. 8). (c) They differ in the way they are procured or maintained. Foolish presumption costs a man nothing, but true assurance is gotten with diligence (2 Peter i. 10; 2 Peter iii. 14), and is kept with watchfulness (Heb. iv. 1, xii. 28, 29; 1 Cor. x. 1, 2). (2) To teach us the necessity of (a) diligence; (b) watchfulness; (c) self-denial. II. WHATSOEVER DEGREES WE HAVE ATTAINED WE MUST PRESS FORWARD TO PERFECTION. 1. Reasons. (1) By this our title is assured. (2) By this our hearts are more prepared in this life for our happiness (Col. i. 12; 1 John iii. 3). (3) By this our glory and blessedness are increased. 2. Use: to persuade us to get ground in our race, which we do as our title is more assured by self-denying obedience. (1) Our end will bear it, to see God and enjoy Him (1 Thess. ii. 12). How much better than all those worldly things upon which we lay out so much. (2) The glory of God requires it. Less grace may serve for our safety and comfort (John xv. 8; Matt. v. 16). (3) The notion of grace implies it, which is continuous (Prov. iv. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 16). There is requisite to this—(a) A strong faith in the world to come (Heb. x. 39). (b) A fervent love, levelling and directing all our actions to God’s glory (2 Cor. v. 14–15). (c) A lively hope quickening and strengthening our resolutions for God and heaven (1 Peter i. 13). III. IT IS A GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE SPIRITUAL RACE THAT CHRIST APPREHENDED US FOR THIS END THAT WE MAY APPREHEND THE CROWN OF LIFE. Christ’s apprehension implies—1. That any motion towards that which is spiritually good proceeds first and wholly from Christ. He is author and finisher (Acts xvi. 14, xxvi. 18; 1 Cor. ii. 14). 2. A motion and subordinate operation on our part. He infuses a new life, which we receive from Christ to use it and live by it (Cant. i. 4; Rom. xii. 2). 3. The tendency of this life is to God and heaven (2 Peter i. 4; Col.

iii. 1-3). 4. Christ having apprehended us still keeps us in His own hands. 5. Use: to press us to answer Christ's apprehension by our exact, resolved, diligent pursuit of eternal life, that will declare that we are apprehended and will be guided by Christ to the land of promise. Two motives. (1) Our obligation to Christ. (2) Christ's interest in us. (*Ibid.*) *Conversion illustrated in the case of Paul*.—I. HOW IS THE WORK OF CONVERSION EFFECTED. Paul says, "I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." How this was done may be seen from Acts ix. 16. 1. Christ got possession of Paul's understanding by appearing to Him in glory. Having once seen the Saviour's glory Paul could not resist His claims. 2. Christ got possession of Paul's heart by assuring him of His grace. 3. Christ got possession of Paul's life. Having surrendered mind and affections he would not be likely to make any reserve. Nor did he; and ever after he said, "To me to live is Christ." II. TO WHAT IS THE WORK OF CONVERSION EXPECTED TO LEAD? To perfection. Paul expected to be perfect—1. In character. 2. In his whole nature—physically (ver. 21); morally, by being sanctified wholly; intellectually, by having all the powers of the mind so fitly harmonized that there should be no undue preponderance, but that each should lend its own proper aid in working out for the renewed man that eternal progression in knowledge to which he is destined. 3. In all his external circumstances. The society, employments, joys of heaven, will make us fully and for ever blest. III. WHO ARE THE SUBJECTS OF THIS CHANGE? How are we to know them? What proof did Paul give of it? The text shows us—1. That he highly appreciated his future destiny (vers. 20-21; 2 Cor. iv. 18, v. 1-9). 2. That he cherished a lively sense of his present deficiencies—"Not as though," &c. 3. That he made it the one great business of his life to realize the blessings of the gospel, both in this life and the next (vers. 12-14 and 7-9). Compare yourselves with Paul. (*J. Jordan.*) *A call to perseverance*.—I. OUR ATTAINMENTS vary, but none is actually secure or absolutely perfect. II. OUR DUTY, to continue in the exercise of faith, self-denial effort. III. OUR HOPE. To gain the full reward, to which Christ has designed us. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian perfection*.—I. THE SENSE IN WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE NOT PERFECT. They are not so perfect as to be free—1. From ignorance: they may know many things material and spiritual, but they do not know the Almighty unto perfection nor many of His ways. 2. From mistake. They do not mistake things essential to salvation; but in non-essentials they err and frequently: in regard, *e.g.*, to facts and their circumstances, and the character of men, and the interpretation of Scripture. 3. From infirmities. They are free indeed from what the worldly calls his infirmity—drunkenness, &c.—but not from weakness or slowness of understanding, and the infirmities of speech and behaviour which spring therefrom. 4. From temptation, since Christ was tempted. 5. Now are they absolutely perfect. How much soever a man has attained he must yet "grow in grace." II. THE SENSE IN WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE PERFECT. 1. They are free from outward sin. (1 John iii. 8-9, 18; Rom. vi. 1-2, 5-7, 11, 14-18; 1 Peter iv. 1-2). It is not said, "He sinneth not wilfully, habitually, as other men, or as he did before." Objection (1) But did not Abraham, Moses, and David commit sin. Yes, but it does not follow that Christians must. Those who argue so seem never to have considered Matt. xi. 11. We cannot measure the privileges of Christians by those formerly given to the Jews. Objection (2) But are there not assertions which prove the same thing? (1 Kings viii. 46; 2 Chron. vi. 36; Eccles. vii. 20). Answer: From the day that sin entered the world there was not a just man that sinned not until the Son of God was manifested to take away our sins. "The heir as long as he is a child differeth nothing from a servant." Holy men of old were, during the infant state of the Church, in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fulness of the times was come, &c. Now therefore we are no more servants but sons. So that whatsoever was the case of those under the law, since the gospel was given "he that is born of God sinneth not." It is of great importance to observe the difference between the two dispensations (John vii. 28). That this great salvation from sin was not given till Jesus was glorified, St. Peter plainly testifies (1 Peter i. 9-10). Objection (3) But did not the apostles sin—St. Paul by his contention, St. Peter by his dissimulation? Yes, but how does that prove that Christians must commit sin. No necessity of sinning was laid upon them. The grace of God was sufficient for them, and it is surely sufficient for us. No man is tempted above that he is able to bear, and with the temptation there is a way of escape. Objection (4) But does not James contradict this (ver. 2). No; he does not refer to himself or Christians (see vers. 9 and 1), where "we" is general or exclusive of Christians. Objection (5) How shall we reconcile St. John with himself? (1 John i. 8, 10). Observe (a) verse 10

fixes the sense of verse 8. (b) The point under consideration is not whether we have or have not sinned heretofore; and neither of these verses asserts that we do sin, or commit it now. (c) Verse 9 explains both verses 10 and 8. We are cleansed from all unrighteousness that we may go and sin no more. St. John is well consistent with himself as well as with the other holy writers. He declares—(a) “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.” (b) No man can say I have not sinned, have no sin to be cleansed from. (c) But God is ready to save us from past and future sins. (d) “These things write,” &c. (1 John ii. 1-2). (e) But lest there should be any doubt on a subject of such vast importance the apostle resumes the subject in Chap. iii., where he carefully explains his own meaning (vers. 7-10). 2. They are free from evil thoughts. But thoughts concerning evil are not always evil thoughts. Our Lord doubtless thought of the things spoken by the devil yet He had no sinful thought. And even thence it follows, neither have Christians (Luke vi. 40). And indeed whence should evil thoughts proceed in the servant who is as His Master (Mark vii. 21, cf. Matt. xii. 33, vii. 17-18). The same happy privilege St. Paul asserts from his own experience (2 Cor. x. 4, &c). 3. From evil tempers. This is evident again from the declaration, “Every one that is perfect shall be as His Master.” Christ had just been delivering some of the sublimest doctrines of Christianity, and some most grievous to flesh and blood—“Love your enemies,” &c. What other than this can St. Paul mean by “I am crucified with Christ,” &c. If 1 John iii. 3 be true, then the Christian—(1) Is purified from pride, for Christ was lowly of heart; (2) from self-will or desire, for Christ desired to do only the will of the Father; (3) from anger in the common sense of the word, for Christ was gentle and long-suffering. Conclusion: Thus doth Christ save His people from their sins. “We shall be saved” say some, “but not till death.” How is this to be reconciled with 1 John i. 5; iv. 17? See 2 Cor. vii. 1. (*John Wesley, M.A.*) *Apprehended that I may apprehend*.—I. PAUL WAS APPREHENDED BY CHRIST or laid hold of. The reference is to the circumstances of His conversion. 1. What was it that arrested Paul? The perception of a perfection of moral character actualized before him in Christ and made possible for him through faith. Up to this time he had been seeking external things, but now with the vision of Christ there came upon him the conviction that even if he gained all these things he would still be fatally defective in the highest elements of his being. Thus, therefore, he was confronted with the great question: “Shall I go on and be content with the hollowness of Phariseism and its inevitable issue? or shall I go back and build my life anew after the matchless pattern which has been set before me?” He could not get away till he had given it an answer. 2. There is not one who has ever come in contact with the gospel of Christ, who has not been laid hold of thus. (1) Young man, as you have been devoting yourself to the idolatry of wealth, or to the pursuit of pleasure or ambition, you have been laid hold of. Christ has come to you through the faithful preacher, and brought you to a standstill by the death of some companion, or laid His hand upon you in sickness, and held you to your couch face to face with the question: “Have I been living a life such as an immortal man should live?” (2) My middled-aged friend, you know about this too. Christ apprehended you and asked you to revise all your theories of life when you buried your darling out of your sight; when your business went all wrong, &c. II. PAUL DID NOT REFUSE TO LAY HOLD OF THAT WHICH JESUS SET BEFORE HIM. 1. There is here, therefore, a human agency as well as a Divine. The stopping of St. Paul in his career, the setting of the truth before him—all that was done for him. He had to choose for himself whether or no he would transfer himself from the service of the world to the service of Christ. 2. But not every one who has been laid hold of has thus responded to the Lord’s appeal—the young ruler who went away sorrowful; Herod, Felix, Agrippa. 3. So with some here. They have seen the wrongness of their present career, but they have not chosen to give it up for the way of Christ; because to do so would have involved the sacrifice of all that hitherto they have cherished. But what can the world do for you, that for its sake you should put away from you the glorious heritage which Jesus promises? III. PAUL WAS NOT CONTENT WITH A MERE PARTIAL ATTAINMENT of that which Christ had set before him. 1. If any man might have been excused for cherishing feelings of complacency it was Paul. Yet he did not go to sleep over the singularity of his conversion; nor rock himself in the cradle of his apostolic success, nor soothe himself with the opiate of his official position. No, ever his eye was fixed on Christ. The more elevated he became in character, the more elevated Christ became to him. 2. Let the distance between you and Christ shake you out of your complacency. Tell us less of what

is behind. Don't be always recounting the story of your conversion. Forget even your joining the Church. Look forward. IV. PAUL WAS NOT DISCOURAGED BECAUSE HE HAD NOT YET FULLY APPREHENDED. There is no note of despondency. His words are full of joyful exhilaration. There are three elements in this aspiration which should encourage those who grieve because they cannot realize perfection. 1. The joy of the soul is inseparably connected with the effort to reach that which is above it. 2. In this aspiration there was the evidence that he had made some progress. 3. The consciousness that he was not striving in his own might. He who helped Paul will help us. Even if we fail occasionally let us not be discouraged, for he who slips on the steep mountain is still higher up than he who is sleeping in the valley. (W. M. Taylor, D.D.) *Apprehended but not apprehending*:—Who that has read that melancholy autobiography left behind him by John Stuart Mill can help recalling here the description which he has given of that which might have been the religious crisis of his life? These are his words: "I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to, unsusceptible to enjoyment or pleasurable excitement—one of those moods when what is pleasure at other times becomes insipid or indifferent—the state, I should think, in which converts to Methodism usually are when smitten by their first 'conviction of sin.' In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: 'Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to could be completely effected at this very instant; would this be a great joy and happiness to you?' And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, 'No.' At this my heart sank within me; the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for." Thus even to him, nurtured though he had been in atheism, and educated without a religion, the Saviour came, laying on him His arresting hand, and beseeching him to adopt a more stable foundation for his life. But alas! he, too, made "the great refusal," and deliberately put away from him that which would have furnished him with a model that can never lose its relative superiority, no matter how we ourselves may grow, and with a motive that can never lose its power. (*Ibid.*) *The misfortune of a realized ideal*:—I recall the story of the artist, who, standing before the latest production of his hands, burst into tears, and on being asked for the reason of his emotion, replied, "Because I am satisfied with my work." He felt he had done all that was in him; that, in a word, he had overtaken his ideal, and so henceforward the joy of his art for him was gone. Perhaps, too, it was something of the same sort that made Alexander weep when he had conquered India. He had filled in the outline of his life which he had made for himself, and thought not that there was yet another world left him where conquest would be far more honourable, even the world within himself. But the Christian is delivered from this danger. He has always the joy of advancement, while yet there is ever something more in Christ beckoning him forward. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 13-14. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.—I. IMPERFECTION ACKNOWLEDGED. Those that have made greatest progress are usually most sensible of imperfections. 1. The reasons of this point. (1) In respect of grace. (a) As grace increases light increases, and so they are most sensible of defects. Novices who know little are most apt to be puffed up (1 Tim. iii. 6). Plutarch tells us that when young men came to study at Athens they were wise men; after they had studied a little only lovers of wisdom, but afterwards found themselves fools. (b) As grace increases love to God is increased, and so sin is more hated. (c) They have more experience of the craft of Satan (2 Cor. ii. 11), and the rocks on which they may split. (2) Because of the world, which they have proved to be vanity and vexation of spirit. (3) Because of themselves. The longer they live the more they are acquainted with themselves, both by meditation and commerce with God, whose perfections should beget humility (Job xlii. 5, 6). (4) Their estate being changed they have now to look to progress in it; and good men cannot run fast enough in the heavenly race. 2. The uses. (1) To teach us that growth in grace and humility usually go together. The laden boughs do most hang their heads. (2) Let us be sensible of our imperfections. (a) In point of knowledge (Prov. xxvi. 12). (b) In point of daily practice (Mark iii. 37). (c) In point of perseverance (Ezek. xxxiii. 13). II. PERFECTION DESIRED. 1. The thing pursued after was "the prize," &c. The prize of eternal glory is set before those whom God hath

"called" in Christ. (1) The calling is (a) outward (Matt. xxii. 14); (b) inward by the operation of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. i. 9). (2) In this calling God in Christ hath the greatest hand. (3) The nature of this calling. (a) The work of God is to give grace whereby the heart of man is changed and sanctified (2 Cor. iv. 6). (b) The duty of man is to be obedient to the heavenly call (John i. 12; Jer. iii. 22; Psa. xl. 8, xxvii. 8; Acts ix. 6). (c) The benefits flowing from both. There is a change in disposition, from sin to holiness; in condition, from misery to happiness. 2. The manner of the prosecution. Those that would be Christians indeed must make heavenly things their scope. (1) The ways in which this is done. (a) Habitually, when you have first fixed your end and renounced the devil, the world, &c., and chosen the better part (2 Cor. iv. 18; v. 9). (b) Actually. It is not enough to choose this part, we must often actually think of it to renew lively affections (Prov. iv. 25). (2) The intention of the end is either (a) formal and explicit, by express thoughts of the world to come when the mind and heart are in heaven (Matt. vi. 21); or (b) implicit and virtual, by the ready, unobserved act of a potent habit (ver. 20). This is necessary that we may be sincere (2 Cor. i. 12). To direct our way; when the eye is on the mark you may the better steer your course towards it. To quicken old endeavours (1 Cor. ix. 24). For joy and solace (Rom. v. 2-3). To make us constant (Heb. x. 39). 3. The earnestness of the pursuit. (1) His diligence. (2) His perseverance. (a) Forgetting the past. (b) Pressing onward. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Christian progress*:—I. THE THINGS BEHIND WHICH ARE TO BE FORGOTTEN. 1. Past sinful pleasures. 2. Past evil acquaintances. 3. Past good works. II. THE THINGS BEFORE. 1. Increased holiness. 2. The prize of eternal glory. (*W. P. Insley, M.A.*) Religion is a progressive principle, and that not merely by Divine appointment, but from its very nature. This is the only satisfactory evidence that religion exists at all. It is also the chief source of happiness here, and a large ingredient in it hereafter. It is not, however, always equally marked and measurable. The incoming tide has receding waves; so let no man judge his neighbour a hypocrite because he thinks he sees a retrograde movement. This progressive character may be argued—I. FROM THE NATURE OF THE SUBJECT IN WHICH THE CHANGE IS WROUGHT. Man, an essentially active being. As previous to conversion the soul was in progress, going from one degree of evil to another, so it may be expected to make progress in the new direction given it. II. FROM THE NATURE OF THE POWER WHICH EFFECTS THE CHANGE. If the effect could be ascribed to chance, or to momentary impulse, it might be expected to be stationary, or even to cease or disappear, but when the power of God, almighty and unceasing, is the sole efficient cause of conversion, it is unreasonable to suppose that the life created can be at a standstill. III. FROM THE MEANS EMPLOYED TO EFFECT THE CHANGE. Had these been of a natural or ordinary character, such as human wisdom might devise and human power set in motion, then we might infer that God intended us to rest contented with actual attainments. But could it be to keep piety alive without improvement or increase that God gave His Son, that that Son came to die, that the Spirit was given? From the prodigality and divinity of the agents and instrumentalities religion cannot be a stationary thing. The purpose must be adequate to the means. IV. FROM THE END FOR WHICH THE CHANGE IS PRODUCED. That end is—1. Not deliverance from present pain. 2. Not mere deliverance from future misery. 3. Nor, indeed, man's restoration by itself. If the end were in man he would usurp God's place. 4. The end is for God's glory. This cannot be adequately promoted by stationary religion. V. FROM THE NATURE OF THE CHANGE ITSELF. As far as Scripture and experience reveal it, it is but an incipient change, and must be carried on for ever. This change does not consist in anything corporeal, but in the mind, and not in the structure of the mind, in the creation of new faculties or the destruction of old ones, but in new desires, dispositions, and affections. These must have their objects, and their actions on those objects must increase their strength, enlarge their scope, and stimulate their energies. VI. FROM THE MANNER IN WHICH GOD HAS BEEN PLEASED TO ENFORCE THE OBLIGATION TO PROGRESS. 1. The emptiness of past achievements. 2. The weight of future glory. (*J. A. Alexander, D.D.*) *Christian progress by oblivion of the past*:—There are some views of the apostle which are discouraging. His almost superhuman career, and his calm superiority to temptation seem to place him far beyond the reach of imitation. But here we see him frail and struggling like the rest of us, a sight precious—(1) To the man, because it tells him that what he feels Paul felt, imperfect, feeble, far from what he would wish to be, yet with sanguine hope expecting progress in the saintly

life. (2) To the minister, because it tells him that his very weakness may be his people's strength. I. THE APOSTLE'S AIM—Perfection. 1. Less than this no Christian can aim at. There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these we might be partakers of the Divine nature. Not merely to be equal to the standard of our day or even to surpass it: but to be pure as Christ is pure, "perfect as our Father in heaven." 2. It is easily conceivable why this perfection is unattainable here. Faultlessness is conceivable, being merely the negation of evil; but perfection is positive, the attainment of all conceivable excellence. Like truth, you may labour on for years and never reach it, yet your labour is not in vain. Every figure you add makes the fraction nearer than the last to the million millionth. 3. To this object the apostle gave himself with singleness of aim—"this one thing." 4. In pressing towards this mark St. Paul attained a prize. The mark was perfection of character—the prize was blessedness. But he did not aim at the prize, but at the mark. In becoming perfect he attained happiness, but that was not his primary aim. In student life there are those who seek knowledge for its own sake, and those who seek it for the prize. To the first knowledge is its own reward, the second are not genuine lovers of knowledge. That is a spurious goodness which is good for the sake of reward. The child who speaks truth for the sake of the praise of truth is not truthful. The man who is honest because honesty is the best policy, has not integrity in his heart. He who endeavours to be holy, &c., to win heaven has only a counterfeit religion. God for His own sake, Goodness because it is good, Truth because it is lovely—are the Christian's aim. The prize is only an incentive, inseparable from success, but is not the aim itself. With this limitation, however, it is a Christian duty to dwell much more on the thought of future blessedness than most men do. If ever the apostle's step began to flag, the radiant diadem before him gave new vigour to his heart. It is our privilege, if we are on our way to God, to keep steadily before us the thought of home. It was so with Moses and with our Lord. II. THE MEANS WHICH ST. PAUL FOUND AVAILABLE FOR THE attainment of Divine and perfect character. 1. What are the things behind which are to be forgotten? (1) The days of innocence. We come into the world with tendencies to evil; but there was a time when there were only tendencies. We call that innocence. And when men come bitterly to feel that it is gone they look back upon it with regret. In this there is much that is feeble and sentimental. Our early innocence is nothing more than ignorance of evil. Christian life is not a retaining of that or a returning to it. We lose our negative sinlessness and put on a firm, manly holiness. (2) The days of youth. Up to a certain period it is our tendency to look forwards; but as we arrive at middle age it is the tendency to look back with the remorseful feeling that the days of youth are gone by half enjoyed. This is a natural feeling, but not the high Christian tone of feeling. We have an inheritance incorruptable, &c. What have we to do with things past? And so manhood in the Christian life is a better thing than boyhood, because riper; and old age ought to be brighter, calmer, and more serene than manhood. There is a second youth for man better and holier than the first, if he will look on and not back. (3) Past errors. There is that rueful, self-accusing temper, which is always looking back. Something of this we ought to have, but not that only. Faith is having the heart to try again. "Forget the things that are behind." We shall do better next time. Under this head we include all those mistakes which belong to circumstances. Some of these are irreparable. A wrong profession, *e.g.*, has been chosen. It is wise to forget all that. It is not by regretting what is irreparable that true work is done, but by making the best of what we are. Poor mediocrity may secure the fewest false steps, but he is the best who wins victory by the retrieval of mistakes. (4) Past guilt. Bad as the results have been of making light of sin, those of brooding over it have been worse. Remorse has done more evil than even hardihood. We want everything that is hopeful for our task, for it is not an easy one. And therefore it is that the gospel comes to the guiltiest with the inspiring news of pardon. Do not stop too long to weep over spilt water. Conclusion: 1. Christian progress is only possible in Christ. It is a high calling, and therefore seems impossible; but it is in Christ Jesus, and therefore to be achieved. 2. Out of Christ it is madness to look on. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The law of progress.*—1. The apostle here corrects a misapprehension, which might have been occasioned by his previous language. The mighty moral act which changed the whole tenor of his life did not so contain in itself his spiritual history as to make all further aspirations and efforts superfluous. Unspiritual men have

thought to compound with heaven by one supreme sacrifice, and so to escape from the wearing trials of the daily struggle. St. Paul maintains that at his conversion he was laid hold of so that he might attain that for which he was still striving, and now with the whole history of the Acts behind him, and having written his greatest Epistles and founded his noblest Churches, and having been caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, he yet forgets those things that are behind, &c. 2. In these words we catch the echo of the most familiar and potent watchword of modern times. The most opposite aspirations and determined antagonists; government, society, art, science, even religion, are ranged under the banner of progress. (1) The source and motive of progress is a sense of want. (2) This is kept alive by an ideal of possible perfection which haunts the soul, and is a relic of Eden. This is largely the distinction of man from the beast. It is the effort to satisfy an unquenchable thirst for the infinite. (3) Allied to this is the mighty power of hope. It may fail, and be seduced and degraded, yet its very errors bear witness to its strength and the greatness of its origin. (4) But is not this yearning joined to this hope of realization among the dispositions which welcome revelation to the soul? Was not revelation for ages a progress from Eden to Moriah, to Sinai, to Calvary? and although it is now complete (Jude 3), yet it has become the principle of progress. On the one hand, through the Church it leaves the world gradually; and, on the other, the apostle here is a sample of its progressive power within the soul, and that it has enriched and is still enriching human thought, ennobled character, and given an original impulse to entire sciences, and created virtues that are impossible without it, are simple matters of fact. I. TRUE PROGRESS MUST BE THE PROGRESS OF MAN AS DISTINCT FROM ANYTHING WHICH IS PROPERLY OUTSIDE HIM. 1. Contrast this with one of the most general conceptions of progress at the present day—that which ministers dignity and well-being to man's outward life. Political reforms, great constructive efforts, rapid locomotion, sanitary improvements, vast accumulations of capital seconded by vast outlays, inventions which economize labour or relieve pain—these are progress. It is almost a marketable commodity; it can be measured, weighed, valued. Mental speculation that does not invent or cannot be utilized, morals which do not sanction economical theories or subserve epicureanism—these are the enemies of progress. We are bidden compare English life to-day with that of the time of our grandfathers. But forgetting the vast achievements of the past and present, we are bidden to look forward to the new triumphs which await us or our children. As contrasted with our grandfathers we are great and powerful; yet for our descendants there is reserved a land of promise, compared with which our modern civilization is but as the desert. To these enthusiasms the Church of God replies in no unfriendly spirit. She has not forgotten the blessing of Eden (Gen. i. 28). Nay, material progress contributes real, if indirect service to the higher interests of man. 2. But at the same time society may be well organized, while man himself is barbarous and selfish. Man's conquests over matter are no adequate measure of the true progress of man. For he is a spiritual being, linked by his higher nature to an immaterial world. Man can rule matter because he is superior to it. Comprehend your matchless dignity in your Creator's world. Each of you has, or rather is, that with which nothing material, atom or planet, can rightly challenge comparison. Each is in the depth of his personality a spiritual substance. 3. Let it be thankfully granted that as a means to a higher end, material improvement is a healthful condition of human life and a blessing from God. But its exaggeration at the expense of what it should subserve is fatal to the progress of man. When the sense of the eternal, and all the finer sensibilities have been crushed out by the worship of matter, man sinks in the creation of God, even though he should learn year by year to wield more and more power over the dead atoms around him. A high material civilization does but arm the human brute with new instruments of his lust or his ferocity, unless it go hand in hand with a power that can penetrate his heart and mould his will. II. MUST EMBRACE THE WHOLE OF HUMAN NATURE. It must not consist in the undue development of a single power or faculty. 1. To some progress is co-extensive with the growth of the mind. And it is our sacred duty to cultivate intellect long and well; not indeed that it may be a pledge of selfish temporal advancement, but as an instrument of religious work. And the religious development of intellect is unquestionably a prominent feature of true human progress. But it is only one feature. 2. When intellectual energy is substituted for moral and spiritual energy; when a man's mind is developed at the expense of his heart and will, he deserves com-

passion. Pure intellectualism is apt to fall short even of the lower measures of duty, and when unbalanced by a warm heart and a vigorous will, the mere cultivation of mind makes a man alternately selfish and weak. III. MUST INCLUDE OR AT LEAST RECOGNIZE THE ATTENDANT FACTS AND OUTLYING CONDITIONS OF HUMAN LIFE.

1. The Fall. How rarely do secular theories of human progress condescend to recognize this solemn fact, even when they do not in terms reject it. Yet there are witnesses to it beyond the precincts of theology. There is the pagan doctrine of the difficulty of virtue; there is the spontaneous tendency to evil profoundly imbedded in humankind, and admitted by un-Christian writers; and there is man's undeniable aversion for his brother man when in a state of nature. So that when man's life is organized into human society, and society is furnishing itself into government, it can only secure itself against tyranny and corruption by a mechanical system of checks and counterchecks. 2. The wonderful phenomenon of grace. Grace is not that mere barren inoperative sentiment of good will or favour on the part of God. In God to will is to act, to favour is to bless; and thus grace is a positive boon conferred on man (Eph. iii. 20); the might of the everlasting Spirit renovating man by uniting him to Christ. 3. Immortality. Can any theory of progress dare to claim our attention which, while not venturing to reject this, in practice proceeds as if they were uncertain or improbable? What a poor, narrow conception of man's capacity for progress is that which sees no horizon beyond the tomb. This is worse than educating a child without training him for the duties or guarding him against the dangers of coming manhood. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The Christian race*:—Behold an excellent description of a Christian course, borrowed from the exercise of running a race, being a manlike and commendable exercise, fitting men and enabling them for war. The very heathen herein condemns us, whose ordinary chief exercises are but good company as we call them, continual lying at taverns, to the impoverishing of our estates and weakening our bodies? The kind I condemn not, but the excess is such as the heathen would be ashamed of; for which they shall even rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us. But from the simile, we may gather thus much, that Christianity is a race. The beginning of this race is at the beginning of our conversion. It should begin at our baptism. The first thing we should know ought to be God. The race is the performance of good duties, concerning our general calling, and concerning our particular. For the length of our races, some are longer, some shorter, but the end of every man's race is the end of his life. Some men's ways are plainer, some rougher. The prize is fulness of joy. The lookers on are heaven, earth, and hell. God is the institutor of this race, and the rewarder. The helpers are Christ, good angels, and the Church, which helps by prayer. The hinderers are the devil and his instruments, who hinder us by slanders, persecutions, and the like. For ground of this race in us, we are to know that man is created with understanding, directing him to do things to a good end and scope. Other creatures are carried to their end, as the shaft out of a bow, only man foreseeing his end, apprehends means thereto. His end is to receive reconciliation and union with God, to which he aims by doing some things, suffering others, and resisting others. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) - *The laws and hindrances of the Christian race*:—I. FOR PREPARATION. 1. The laws. (1) As those who ran had to use such diet as did strengthen, not cloy, and such apparel as might cover, not clog them, so the Christian (Heb. xii. 1). (2) We must consider the ways we are to run in, and what dangers we are like to meet with. The want of this is the ground of apostasy. (3) We must enter the race betimes. The devil's trick is to tell us we have plenty of time; but life is uncertain, and youth is the best time to get into training. 2. Hindrances. (1) Hope of long life. (2) A conceit that when we have given our names to Christ we must bid adieu to all delight. (3) A despair of getting through. II. FOR CONTINUANCE. 1. Laws. (1) You must resolve to hold on without failing in good duties. (2) You must look to gain ground, and grow from grace to grace. (3) You must do all things with all your might. (4) You must run cheerfully and speedily. 2. Hindrances. (1) Idle scruples which are as dust thrown in the eyes of runners, and temptations which are as stones to their feet. (2) Sins against conscience. (3) Ill and dull company. (4) Wandering minds. (*Ibid.*) *Onward!*—So far as acceptance with God is concerned a Christian is complete in Christ as soon as he believes. But while the work of Christ for us is complete, that of the Holy Spirit in us is not complete, but is continually carried on from day to day. The condition in which every believer should be found is that of progress. Nearly every figure by which Christians are described implies this. We are plants in the Lord's field, but we are

sown that we may grow. "First the blade," &c. We are born into the family of God; but there are babes, little children, &c. Is the Christian a pilgrim? Then he must not sit down as if rooted to a place. Is he a warrior, wrestler, &c.? These figures are the very opposite of idleness. Admire our apostle as—**I. FORMING A JUST ESTIMATE UPON HIS PRESENT CONDITION.** "I count," as if he had taken stock, made a careful estimate, and had come to a conclusion. The conclusion was dissatisfaction; nor was this to be regretted: it was a sign of true grace. And yet he was vastly superior to any of us. Shame then on us poor dwarfs if we are so vain as to account ourselves as having apprehended. Yet there are those who prate of having reached a higher life than this. But self-complacency is the mother of spiritual declension. We have observed—1. That the best of men do not talk of their attainments. Their tone is self-depreciation, not self-content. Everybody could see their beauty of character but themselves. Shallow streams brawl and bubble, but deep waters flow on in silence. 2. That we, in our holiest moments, do not feel self-complacent. Job spoke up for his innocence till the Lord revealed Himself. We shall never see the beauty of Christ without perceiving our own deformity. 3. That whatever shape self-satisfaction may assume it is a shirking of the hardships of Christian soldierhood. Some shirk watchfulness and repentance by believing that the only sanctification they need is already theirs by imputation. Personal holiness, they say, is legal. Others believe they have perfection in the flesh, and others yet attain complacency by the notion that they have overcome all their sins by believing they have done so, as if believing a battle won could win it. 4. That complacency can be reached by many roads. (1) Enthusiasts reach it by sheer intoxication of excitement. (2) Antinomians by imagining that the law is abolished, and that sin is not sin in the saints. (3) Cowards, who say we cannot conquer all sin, and, therefore, we need not aim at it. 5. That complacency has its root in forgetfulness of the awful holiness of God's law, and the heinousness of sin. **II. PLACING THE PAST IN ITS TRUE LIGHT.** "Forgetting," &c. 1. He does not mean—(1) That He forgot the mercy of God he had enjoyed. (2) That he forgot the sins he had committed. 2. We must follow out his figure. If a racer were to pass most of his fellows, and then look round and rejoice over the distance covered he must lose the race. His only hope is to forget all behind. (1) So must it be with past sins overcome. Perhaps at this moment you can honestly say, "I have overcome a fierce temper," "I have bestirred a naturally indolent spirit." Stop long enough to say, "Thank God for that"; but do not pause to congratulate yourselves, or it may be soon undone. The easiest way to give resurrection to old corruptions is to erect a trophy over their graves. Yonder friend is very humble, but if he were to boast of it there would be an end of it. (2) So with all the work we have done. Some people have good memories as to their performances. They used to serve God wonderfully when they were young. In middle life they wrought marvels, but now they rest on their oars. As long as you are in the world forget what you have done, and go forward—individuals, churches, denominations. **III. Paul having put the past and present in their proper places goes on to the FUTURE, ASPIRING EAGERLY TO MAKE IT GLORIOUS.** We ought to be reaching forward, to be like Jesus. He who would be a great artist must not follow low models. "Be ye perfect." Shall we ever reach it. Millions have who are before the throne, and we shall too by God's good help. **IV. PUTTING FORTH ALL HIS EXERTIONS TO REACH THAT WHICH HE DESIRES.** 1. "This one thing I do." He might have attempted other things, and did, but all with reference to this one purpose. 2. Why? Because he felt God had called him to it. 3. Moreover he saw the crown. (C. H. Spurgeon.) **The great prize:—I. THE PURPOSE OF PAUL:** What is involved in it? 1. Supreme love to Christ and consecration to His service. 2. Deadness to all human ambitions and merely earthly good. So absorbed is the soul in this one idea that it becomes the master-passion of life; and the world, the flesh, and all things else cease to have any attraction. 3. Not satisfied with any measure of past attainment, or service, or consecration, but continually reaching forth with ever-growing ardour. There, in full view, is the "goal," and the racer's eye is fixed on it. **II. PAUL'S MEANING AS TO THE PRIZE WAS A PERSONAL RESEMBLANCE TO CHRIST, AND A DESIRE TO BE NEAR HIM.** His vision of Christ in the infinite attractiveness of His character, and in the glory and blessedness of His presence and reign in heaven, made him long to be like Him, and to have, not only a place in His kingdom, but a place hard by the throne of the Lamb. Multitudes of Christians are content just to be saved—to get inside the heavenly gate. But Paul rebukes this spirit. He had a higher and truer ambition. **III. HOW THE GREAT**

PRIZE IS TO BE WON. In no other way than Paul won it. 1. The mind must contemplate it, the heart be fixed upon it, until the power of it shall overmaster all other objects and passions. 2. The purpose to gain it must be single as well as supreme. Divided affection, and allegiance, half-hearted strivings, will end in disappointment and disaster. The whole soul, purpose, and trend of life must be in the direct line of daily striving. 3. To insure success, all dead weights must be thrown off, all unnecessary hindrances avoided, all entangling alliances sacrificed, and "the sins which do so easily beset" or hinder us, put away. (*G. F. Pentecost, D.D.*) *Life's contests and prizes*:—Such was the language of the most masterful man that ever trod the earth, and this utterance is the key-note of his marvellously successful life. I. SINGLENESSE OF EYE, UNITY OF PURPOSE, CONCENTRATION OF POWER. This one thing I do, he cries, and he does it. II. HIS WAS A SANCTIFIED, BUT BOUNDLESS AMBITION, for ever reaching forth in the direction of higher acquisitions of spiritual truth and nobler results of Christian work. III. PAUL PRESSED EVER TOWARD A DEFINITE WORK. Paul's mark was the highest that ever loomed up before a human soul. IV. THIS WAS ALSO THE PRIZE HE SOUGHT. Earth has its prizes, its crowns, its plaudits, its splendid fortunes. Heaven's real prize is Christ Himself, and so Paul's aspiration was, "That I may win Christ and be found in Him." (*P. S. Henson, D.D.*) *Paul's view of life* was what it should be.—I. FORGETFUL OR OBLIVIOUS TOWARDS THE PAST. 1. Of course the figure is not strictly applicable to the reality. Life cannot break itself from the past. The continuity of life cannot be divided at any point. Nor would it be well if it could. Up to whatever point we have run our race we have accumulated experience which has entered into life's texture and given it direction and colour which it will more or less always keep. And Paul did not mean it in this sense. There are dark days and bright faces that will never die away. 2. What the apostle means is that we are to forget the things which are behind as no longer practically concerning us. Nothing can now be altered. (1) Did we stand well in the past? Then let us not take credit for it. There is no time for self-elation or self-sufficiency. As soon as you begin to dwell with self-complacency on the past you lose your ideal of duty, and your right sense of the claims of the future and the present. This is the mark of a small and never of a great life. (2) Have we done imperfectly or ill in the past? Let us not brood or despair. The past is done with us, let us have done with it, and in putting off the old let us put on the new. The future is before you; the present is still yours. II. EAGER AND FULL OF ASPIRATION TOWARDS THE FUTURE. 1. Life by itself has a tendency to stagnate, to grow commonplace, bounded in desire and aim. The young live mainly in the future; but by and by the vision fades away or becomes limited. A definite prospect of duty opens up within which the man must work, and find his happiness in working. Many lives are wrecked at this point, just because they will not settle and go to some definite work. The world neglected, neglects them. The very dream of hope to do something better has been their ruin. 2. But this is no reason why a hopeful eagerness towards the future should die out of life. All right-minded men should have their gaze so far on the future that they may hope to become better and have more enthusiasm and patient continuance in well doing. This is to stretch forth unto the things before; to have not merely an ideal, but to work out our character, by God's help, more and more into the forms of that ideal. 3. In whatever respect we feel that we are offenders against the law of Divine perfection revealed in Christ let us be more active. It is too often the case as life goes on to get contented with our characters such as they are. III. ENERGETIC IN THE PRESENT. 1. Paul did not perplex himself with questions as to the meaning of life, or use of it. He was not found asking, as clever writers now are, Is life worth living? Such is only the case when a kind of sickness has come over human speculation. Paul had too much common sense and manliness, and moreover had a real work to do. 2. His example may be beyond us, but the spirit that moved him to work may be ours. It is not necessary that we should have any great work to do, although we have all such work in the improvement of our own characters, and in making life sweet around us. 3. Unlike many in our day, who have cast the hope of the future away from them, we have something for which to work—the mark for the prize of the high calling. (*Principal Tullock.*) *Memory, hope, and work*:—The future for the young, we say, the present for the middle-aged, the past for the old. But these words of sublime hopefulness are from "Paul the Aged." I. LIVE IN THE FUTURE. 1. The two objects of hope and effort are distinct though connected. The mark is reached by the runner's

effort, the prize is the reward given for victory. The former stands for "being made conformable unto Christ's death," the latter for "attaining the resurrection;" or the mark is likeness to Christ, and the prize whatsoever glory and felicity God shall give besides. 2. Then there is to be a distinct recognition of moral perfection as our conscious aim, and our efforts are allowably stimulated by the hope of the fair reward it ensures. If you want to be blessed you must be good; if you want to get to heaven you must be like Christ. 3. Our highest condition is not the attainment of perfection, but the recognition of heights above us as yet unreachd. (1) Such recognition is the condition of all progress. The artist who is satisfied with his transcript of his ideal will never grow any more. Unless we saw an ideal far above us, the actual would never approximate toward it. The unrest born of the contrast between these two marks man off from the happy contentment of the brutes beneath him, and the happy peacefulness of the angels of God. (2) That is eminently true of "growth in grace." The type for us is the express image of God in Christ. To that supreme beauty our nature is capable of unlimited approach. No bounds can be set to it. (3) There are two ideas in that notion of perfection. (a) Extirpation of sin; (b) Attainment of the Divine likeness. Sin may be extirpated, and yet the second process may be in its infancy. And we shall not stop growing in heaven, but through the eternities we shall be growing wiser, nobler, stronger, greater, and more filled with God. (4) This grand future should draw our thoughts all the more to itself, because it is not only grand, but certain. "We know that . . . we shall be like Him." (5) And therefore that habit of living in the future should make us glad and confident. And that is the true temper for wider interests than our own. Live in the future for yourselves, and for the world. Believe in a millenium of some sort or other, because that faith is wrapped up in the confidence that God loves us all, and is shaping this earth's history to His own perfect aim, and instead of lamenting "the former days were better," let us believe that the time will come when our brethren with us will have reached the mark, and the purposes of God finished in a redeemed humanity and a perfected world.

II. LET THAT BRIGHT, CERTAIN, INFINITE FUTURE DWARF FOR US THE NARROW AND STAINED PAST. 1. This advice goes dead against much "experimental" Christianity; but it is wise for all that. All sorts of backward-looking are a positive weakness and impediment to a man in running a race. Time given to such occupation is withdrawn from the actual work of life. A man cannot run with his eyes over his shoulder; he is sure to knock against somebody, and so be delayed and hindered. And if you stand there looking backwards instead of making the best of your way out of evil, the evil will catch you up. Remembering always tends to become a substitute for doing. But take the injunction more specifically. 1. Forget past failures. They are apt to weaken you. You say, "I shall never be any better. Experience teaches me my limits." So it does. There are certain things we shall never be able to do, but it says nothing about the limits in our line of things. There is no limit in that respect, and to take the past as proving it is to deny the power of God's gospel, the expansibility of the soul, and the promise of the Divine Spirit. 2. Forget past attainments. (1) They are apt to become food for complacency and every vain confidence. We are apt to say, "At such and such a time I was converted and growing in Christian attainments. Then my heart was cleaving to the Lord, and filled with His fulness." Yes, and you ate your dinner twenty years ago; will that serve to strengthen you for to-day? The rain fell on the young spring wheat when you and I were boys; will that do anything towards this year's harvest? (2) These attainments, like failures, do very often become the measure of our notion as to what we shall be able to do in the future, and so cripple us. 2. Forget past circumstances, whether sorrows or joys. The one are not without remedy, the other not perfect. Both are past; why remember them? Why should you carry about parched corn when you dwell among fields white unto harvest? Why clasp a handful of poor withered flowers when the grass is sown with their bright eyes opening to the sunshine? III. LET HOPES FOR THE FUTURE AND LESSONS FROM THE PAST LEAD TO STRENUOUS WORK FOR THE PRESENT. "This one thing I do." 1. Be the past and future what they may, I cannot reach the one nor forget the other except by setting myself with all my might to present duties and by reducing all duties to various forms of one life purpose. 2. How is that noble ideal reached? It is the spirit in which, not the work at which, we work that makes life one. A hundred processes may go to the manufacture of a pin. We may all be trying to be like Jesus Christ, whatever may be the material at which we toil. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *Behind and before* :—1. This is the language of

men who subdue the world, the motto of all heroes, the secret of all triumph.

2. We here observe one of those laws of compensation by which nature would atone for the inequality of her gifts. All men have not great talents: but all men may have great industry, and as talents are useless without diligence, one talent improved by honest labour will make a greater man than ten that rust unused.

3. Paul's entire life was an illustration of the text. As a lad he was bent on scholarship, and won honours at the feet of Gamaliel; as a member of the Jewish Church by his prodigal ability he soon placed himself beyond parallel. As a convert to Christianity he was the same man in singleness and intensity of purpose.

4. Another feature in Paul's character. He arrogates no particular saintship. His fellow disciples are not left to infer that his path is accessible to no traveller but himself. He preaches to sinners as the chief of sinners, to Christians as a fellow citizen; the race and fight were his no less than theirs.

I. WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS WHICH PAUL LEFT BEHIND AND FORGOT.

1. Whatever he had given up for Christ (ver. 7). He forgot them in the sense of neglecting them. He not only never repented these sacrifices, he forgot them. The Israelites fondly recollected the flesh-pots of Egypt, and there are Christians who dispute with themselves whether in the sensitive jealousy of their first love they did not make too many sacrifices for their Master. The man who calculates with even a tincture of discontent what he has suffered for Jesus, has never seen the Cross.

2. The errors and doubts that marked his first approach to Christ. (1) He never said but once, "Who art thou, Lord? What wilt Thou have me do?" As soon as it pleased God to reveal His Son to Paul, he disentangled his mind for ever from the elements or rudiments that typified and foreshadowed Christ, and never returned to those beggarly elements. Mark the confidence of his personal feelings when he finds occasion to impart them—"I know whom I have believed." This is the language of a man who has laid aside for ever the doubt of his acceptance with God, of Christ's ability to save, of his Master's constant presence and guiding spirit. Doubts on other matters arising in the progress of his ministry he would discuss in their proper time, but those which had been once disposed of were forgotten for ever. (2) What a melancholy religion is theirs who are ever contending with old doubts. After the Lord has shown Himself to the eye of faith, they seem unable to let this matter rest. A conversation with an unbeliever, the perusal of a book, the pressure of a besetting sin, disturbs their assurance, and they go over the old ground. (3) Having obtained faith in Jesus and adoption into God's family, they ought to give all diligence to add to their faith courage to confess it. A bold utterance of our trust in Jesus is an excellent remedy for unbelieving fears. To this boldness of confession they should add knowledge, and follow on to know the Lord. This will multiply instances of His faithfulness. And then, lest knowledge should puff up, there should follow self-discipline, meek endurance, fervent piety towards God, and charity to men.

II. We have seen what Paul left behind: LET US NOW COME UP TO THE FRONT AND LOOK INTO THE DISTANCE FOR THE THINGS TOWARDS WHICH PAUL IS RUNNING, AND REACHING AS HE RUNS. These are all embraced in fellowship with Christ.

1. Few knew more of Christ than Paul, yet he considered his attainments but as the first steps in a path of ever-unfolding discovery. Jesus was a mine just opened; and he describes his prospects like a man almost bewildered by the sudden inheritance of wealth untold.

2. To win Christ was not to gain His favour simply, but to be conformed to His image. (E. E. Jenkins, LL.D.)

Spiritual barbarism:—I. TWO THOUGHTS ARE HERE SUGGESTED.

1. The apostle's principle is the very one which makes the civilized man distinct from the barbarian. The characteristic of the former is restless progressiveness; of the latter, supineness and stagnation. (1) The civilizing man has his caravan track, but he will have one directer and easier. He has turn-pikes and stage coaches, but he must level or tunnel the mountain, and lay a pavement of iron, and chain his car to a horse of fire. The earth yields him enough to eat, but he will not live by bread alone; he must eat bread enough to bring with it a better provided life; so he contrives steam ploughs and threshers to make the arm of the farmer equal to the productive power of the sun and field. He finds the pen too slow, hence his types and cylinders scatter libraries. On the other hand, the barbarian is content to live in a hut, to scratch the ground with a stick, to trudge on foot with a trail for a road. He takes the world as he finds it, and leaves it as he found it. (2) But the one sort do not all live where civilization prevails, nor do the others in lands where barbarism is dominant. Every civilized region has risen out of barbarism, and we see the barbarian spirit in stagnant

conservatism resisting improvement. (3) None the less does the old barbarian strain come to the surface. When a man thinks of his moral condition, he says, "I am as good as the average of my neighbours." It is this from which man has to be saved. 2. A rule which God has made fundamental in the world, we must make so in individual life. (1) Since the day when man first lighted a fire to boil his pot, and hollowed out his first canoe, up to the day when the latest development of these contrivances appears in the steamship which can sail three thousand miles a week, the world has never rested in its advance. What achievements has the world made and forgotten in achieving better. Again and again it would seem as if the men of Babylon, of Memphis, of Athens, and Rome must have said to themselves, "No more beyond." Modern men have said this, and prophesied dire results from setting up of power instead of hand looms, sewing machines instead of needles, locomotives instead of coach horses. But the world moved on to "forget the things behind," &c. (2) Said the popes to those who saw a purer Church and truth attainable, "No more beyond, except the fire for those who would disturb our established order." So said the English kings of the seventeenth century to the uprising spirit of liberty. So say the theologians to-day; but the world and the Church move on. There are branches to spring from the ever-growing trees that have not yet even budded. (3) What God works in the great whole, we are to work in our part. He in the man, we as the molecules of the man are to be of one mind—"forgetting," &c. II. FROM THESE THOUGHTS WE MAY DRAW FRESH CONVICTIONS FOR THE REALIZATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL CAPABILITIES OF OUR NATURE. 1. While we derive inspirations of confidence from contemplating the grand law of the world's increasing progress, must we not see a stern rebuke upon every life not in harmony with this law? 2. On what principle is our personal life and thought conducted? So far as relates to our worldly condition, our constant endeavour for betterment as the necessity of an undecaying life. How then about the far more important thing? All unimproveable life must sooner or later run out. When the law of development will not work, the law of decay and dissolution is the only one that will. Work, then, with the better law intelligently, consistently, perseveringly. 3. The great reproach of Christianity is its passive content with an average morality, and a life devoid of aspiration to higher levels—in a word, its spiritual barbarism, stagnant, supine, and poor in power. (*J. M. Whiton, Ph. D.*) *Winter leaves*.—Trees have their winter as well as their summer foliage. Every one is familiar with the buds which tip the extremities of every branch in spring. On the outside they are covered with dry, glossy scales, which are true leaves of the lowest type. They are formed in spring, and grow during the whole summer, though very slowly, owing to the diversion of the sap from them to the foliage, behind which they are hid. As the season advances, the sap gradually ceases to flow to the summer leaves, which therefore ultimately fade and fall from the tree; and the last movements of it, at the end of autumn, are directed towards the buds, in order to prepare them for taking at the proper time the place of the generation of leaves that has just perished. But in spring, the buds, stimulated by the unwonted sunshine, begin to open at their sharp extremities. And as the young green leaves within expand in the genial atmosphere, the services of the bud-scales, or covering-leaves, are no longer needed, and by and by they roll away, and fall one by one from the tree, strewing the ground beneath till it looks like a threshing-floor. Thus every tree has a double leaf-fall every year. The winter leaves, which are designed for the protection of the bud during winter, are pushed off by the growth of the summer leaves from the bud in spring; and the summer leaves, which are designed for the nourishment and growth of the tree in summer, wither and fall off in autumn. Cold is fatal to the summer leaves; warmth is fatal to the winter leaves. Inactivity renders useless the summer leaves; and growth supersedes the winter leaves. I. THE APO-TLE'S LIFE AFFORDS MANY STRIKING ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS. 1. In his unconverted state, there were many things on which he prided himself—the scenes and associations of his youth, the eager sympathies of his opening intellect, and his ardent affection for the polity and religion of his fathers. But all these natural qualifications of the man belonged to the winter or unregenerate state of his soul; were winter leaves that hid and confined the germ of spiritual life. 2. But although worthless as grounds of justification, they had their own value in training and fitting him for his work. Like the bud scales, they afforded protection and nourishment. All that he had acquired, he laid on the altar. 3. And when the great crisis of his life came—the spring-time of his conversion, a light exceeding the brightness of the noonday sun shone upon him; and in this

warm genial atmosphere of grace, the germ of spiritual life unfolded itself within, and burst its wrappings. Old forms ceased to have any hold upon his affections and homage. He died to his former self and all its experiences, and lived a new life in Jesus. The winter-leaves having served their purpose, now dropped off, and the summer leaves of grace—the blossoms of holiness, the fruits of righteousness—had full liberty to grow and develop themselves. 4. But we must not suppose that the dropping was without effort or pain. It sometimes needs a severe gust of wind to shake off the scales that still linger around the bud. And it was with a sore wrench that St. Paul tore himself away from all his former cherished associations. 5. But even in his converted state there were many things which Paul required to forget. The branch of a tree puts forth bud after bud in its gradual growth and enlargement. These summer leaves, having added a cubit to the stature of the branch, pass away; and the added growth in its turn puts forth a new bud covered with its scales or winter leaves, which drop off the following spring, and allow the imprisoned summer leaves once more to unfold themselves in the sunny air. And so was it with St. Paul. His spiritual life from the beginning to the end was a series of fresh beginnings. Not once merely at conversion, but often in his converted state, had he to form and to drop the winter leaves in the process of spiritual growth. There were many things by which his spiritual life was nourished and guarded—which had to be blotted out if he would go on to perfection. And so he reached forth unto those things which were before. II. ARE NOT THE LESSONS OF SUCH A LIFE VERY BROAD AND INTELLIGIBLE. 1. Forgetfulness of what is behind is an essential element in the progress of every believer. In our conversion we must separate ourselves from the associations of our unregenerate state, and count those things that were gain to us, loss, so that we may be found in Christ. These winter leaves must fall off, when the vernal season of grace has come, and we who were dead in trespasses and sins are made alive unto God. 2. But not at this initiatory stage merely is there to be a discarding of the things that are behind. At every subsequent stage of our growth there must be the same process. By a course of prosperity our souls are made to unfold in gratitude to God and beneficence to men. In a season of sorrow we are made more heavenly reminded. But these means are not to be cherished as if they were the end. We are to keep them in the background, and prize the character they have formed for the glory of God, and not for self-complacency. These winter leaves that cherished and nourished our growth in grace must drop off from time to time, with each new attainment that we “may rise on stepping-stones of our dead selves to nobler things.” 3. But not the means of growth and formative processes of the Christian character only, must be left behind and forgotten; the very ends, the growths themselves, must also be superseded. In a certain sense each attainment must be the bud-covering of a succeeding attainment, and fall away when it is matured. There must be a double leaf-fall from the soul as well as from the tree. The summer leaves that are cherished must drop off as well as the winter leaves that cherished them. And so the beautiful blossoms of grace must be left behind. To rest satisfied with attainment is to check development. It is amazing how soon when we cease to forget the things that are behind, and remain stationary we degenerate. When means become ends, they encase us with a hard covering impervious to the tender influences of heaven. III. ST. PAUL EXHORTED THE HEBREW CHRISTIANS TO LEAVE THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, AND TO GO ON TO PERFECTION. And such an exhortation is still greatly needed. 1. Very many believers stop short at the very initial processes of grace, and imagine that these are the final ends—that nothing more can be desired or attained. It is as if the life of the tree always remained in the bud, instead of casting off its wrappings and expanding into summer foliage and fruit. Conversion is indeed all-essential, for while the heart is unchanged there can be neither life nor growth; but it is merely the commencement of a course. Conversion, justification, and peace are the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. They are not, indeed, to be dropped as mere bud-scales, as mere means to an end—for they are the basis upon which all the subsequent efforts of the spiritual life are to be made. But just as in the unfolding buds of the lilac and horse-chestnut tree, the covering leaves of winter, pass through intermediate changes—in the one into the blades of the leaf, and in the other into the leaf stalks—so the principles of the doctrine of Christ are to be carried on in the growth, and their substance is to be used up and modified, as it were, in the expansion of the soul. In this sense the things that are behind are to be forgotten. 2. It is vain to tell the believer to forget the things that are behind, to discard the preparatory means by which he advances in piety by a mere

temporary effort of will. He cannot do so. It is only by growing that he can get rid of the things no longer essential; and what he cannot remove, except by a violent destructive wrench, will fall off easily, and of its own accord, when superseded and rendered effete by growth. 3. To this development we should be further stimulated by the consideration that the bud whose growth is arrested becomes transformed into a thorn. If our winter leaves—the experiences that contribute to form our character, and which are appropriate to the various stages of our growth—be allowed to remain unchanged and unforgetten, and to choke up our spiritual life so as to arrest its advancement, they will be changed into thorns. The peace that we trust in will vanish in sorrow. The attainment with which we are satisfied becomes a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet us lest we be exalted above measure. It is no unusual thing to see a branch of a tree whose vital activity is so enfeebled that its growth is arrested. Its terminal bud loses the power of throwing off its winter leaves, because no summer leaves form in its interior. The bud then dies, and the branch withers and becomes fit for the burning. And so it is, alas! no unusual thing to see branches in Christ whose spiritual life is so weak that their growth is at a standstill. They lose the power of forgetting the things that are behind, because they are not reaching forth unto those things which are before. They are therefore in danger of perishing. There is a sense, indeed, in which we cannot forget the things that are behind, strive as we may. The winter leaves or bud-scales of a tree leave behind them when they drop off a peculiar mark or scar on the bark, just as the summer leaves do when they fall. On every branch a series of these scars, in the shape of rings closely set together, may be seen, indicating the points where each growing shoot entered on the stage of rest. And so every experience through which we pass, every act we perform, goes into the very substance of our being, and we can never be after it what we were before it. But though these things cannot in this sense be forgotten, they should not be allowed to hang around us to impede our efforts at improvement, any more than the development of the tree is impeded by its scars. We must remember the failures and sins of the past in order to magnify the mercy that forgave. Conclusion: 1. Taking a comprehensive view of the universe, we find that everything has a special object to perform, and when that object is accomplished, the agency perishes. The material system of nature will some day be dissolved. Life on earth is not an end, but a means—a state of discipline and preparation for something higher and nobler beyond, and is therefore transitory in its duration. So, too, the means of grace are the scaffolding by the aid of which the spiritual life is built up, and will be removed as a deformity when the building is completed. Everything that is purely subordinate and distinctive in religion—that is extraneous to the spiritual nature, however necessary to educate it—will vanish as the winter leaves of time from the expanding bud of everlasting life. “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three.” 2. It is through loss that all gain in this world is made. But in heaven a different law of development will prevail. In the trees of warm climates the buds have no winter leaves or protective scales, being simply formed of the ordinary leaves rolled up; consequently they expand in growth without losing anything. And so it will be in the eternal summer above. There will be a constant unfolding of the fulness of immortal life from glory to glory; but there will be no loss of the processes and experiences through which the unfolding will take place. The means and the end will be one and the same. There will be a constant reaching forth unto those things which are before, but there will be no forgetting the things that are behind. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) This one thing I do.—*Concentration*:—The secret of all moral force, of all spiritual success, of all reality, is concentration. And what is concentration? The whole man gathering himself up to a point—oneness of being, body, soul, spirit—the will, judgment, energy in unity. And what is unity? The reflection of the one great God. What a beautiful thing is unity, where all the attributes of God meet together in love; beautiful is the world of harmonies in the home where there is no jarring element, in the knit Church, in the man who, having learned the pervading power of the love of Jesus, says henceforth, “This one thing I do.” I. THERE ARE TWO WAYS IN WHICH WE MAY MAKE RELIGION ONE THING. 1. The exclusive way. A man may determine to have nothing to do with anything not essentially religious. 2. The inclusive way, when a man makes a wide circle of engagements converge towards religion. II. TO MAKE LIFE, AS IT OUGHT TO BE, ONE, THE GREAT REQUISITE IS TO HAVE ONE FIXED AIM. It is the want of this that makes the life of so many weak, uncertain, capricious. The far, high, gathering point,

high enough to sustain life, is only one—the glory of God. Some of you did once live for another object—pleasure, self, sin. You served your master with good service. What you have to do now is to throw as much heart into the new purpose as you did once into the old. III. THE GLORY OF GOD IS THE RIGHT END OF MAN, because—1. All the lines of life go up to it. You can eat and drink to it, and do whatever you do to it. 2. It is God's end: the end for which God is, for which He gave Christ, for which He does everything. IV. UNDER THIS END OF ENDS AND SUBSERVIENT TO IT IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY ONE TO HAVE SOME DISTINCT CHRISTIAN PURPOSE ALWAYS BEFORE HIM. It is marvellous how, when you have a work in hand for God, it will brace up your whole being. If you are troubled with wandering thoughts in prayer or in Church, it is because your outer life is not concentrated. If you would live a braced life everywhere you would find fixedness of thought in your devotions. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Concentration the secret of dispatch*:—The famous De Witt, one of the greatest statesmen of his age, being asked how he was able to dispatch the multitude of affairs in which he was engaged, replied that his "whole art consisted in doing one thing at a time. (*S. Budgett.*) *Devotion to a single purpose essential to success*:—That was a grand action of old Jerome when he laid all his pressing engagements aside to achieve a purpose to which he felt a call from heaven. He had a large congregation—as large a one as any of us need want; but he said to his people, "Now, it is if necessity that the New Testament should be translated; you must find another preacher. The translation must be made; I am bound for the wilderness, and shall not return till my task is finished." Away he went with his manuscripts, and prayed and laboured, and produced a work—the Latin Vulgate—which will last as long as the world stands; on the whole, a most wonderful translation of Holy Scripture. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *One point best*:—I asked Sir James Scarlett what was the secret of his pre-eminent success as an advocate. He replied that he took care to press home the one principal point of the case without paying much regard to the others. He also said that he knew the secret of being short. "I find," said he, "that when I exceed half an hour I am always doing mischief to my client; if I drive into the heads of the jury unimportant matter, I drive out matter more important which I had previously lodged there. (*Sir T. F. Buxton.*) *Want of application*:—A Frenchman hit off in a single phrase the characteristic quality of the inhabitants of a particular district, in which a friend of his proposed to settle and buy land. "Beware," said he, "of working a purchase there; I know the men of that department; the students who come from it to our veterinary school in Paris do not strike hard upon this anvil; they want energy, and you will not get any satisfactory return on the capital you may invest there." (*S. Smiles, LL.D.*) *A life's purpose*:—He has a purpose that miner's son. That purpose is the acquisition of knowledge. He speedily exhausts the resources of Mansfeld, reads hard, devours lectures at Magdeburg, and at the age of eighteen has outstripped his fellows, has a university for his admirer, and professors predicting for him the most successful career of the age. He has a purpose that scholar of Erfurt. That purpose is the discovery of truth, for in an old library he has stumbled on a Bible. Follow him out into the new world which that volume has flashed upon his soul. With Pilate's question on his lip and in his heart, he foregoes his brilliant prospects—parts without a sigh with academical distinctions—takes monastic vows in an Augustine convent; until at last Pilate's question answered on Pilate's stairs—then comes the thrice repeated gospel whisper, "The just shall live by faith," and the glad evangel scatters the darkening and shreds off the paralysis, and he rises into moral freedom, a new man in the Lord! He has a purpose that Augustine monk. That purpose is the Reformation. Waiting with the modesty of the hero until he is forced into the strife, with the courage of the hero he steps into the breach to do battle for the living truth. (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) *An indomitable purpose*:—On one bright summer day the boy, then just seven years old, lay on the bank of the rivulet which flows through the old domain of his house to join the Isis. Then, as three-score and ten years later he told the tale, rose in his mind a scheme which through all the turns of his eventful career, was never abandoned. He would recover the estate which belonged to his fathers. He would be Hastings of Daylesford. This purpose formed in infancy and poverty, grew stronger as his intellect expanded and his fortunes rose. He pursued his plan with that calm but indomitable force of will which was the most striking peculiarity of his character. When, under a tropical sun, he ruled 50,000,000 of Asiatics, his hopes, amidst all the cares of war, finance, and legislation, still pointed to Daylesford, the possession of it

being the summit of his ambition. At length the wish was accomplished; and the domain, alienated more than seventy years before, returned to the descendants of its old lords, and when his public life was closed for ever, it was to Daylesford that he retired to die. (*Lord Macaulay.*) Forgetting the things that are behind.—*Things past*:—I. VICTORIES. II. ERRORS. III. SINS. IV. JOYS. V. GRIEFS. (*Prof. Hollard.*) *Things behind*:—The things behind and the memory of them may be helpful or hurtful. We often find the former, e.g., God's mercies are to be remembered as a theme of gratitude; past sins to produce penitence; former history as ground of warning and hope (*Dent. iv. 9, viii. 2, ix. 7; Psa. lxxvii. 5, ciii. 2; Ezek. xvi. 63*). Paul speaks of the past as hurtful, a hindrance. He speaks as a runner; perfect as regards equipment, consecration, aim; but not perfected as having attained the goal; he looks not behind him but hurries on. The memory of things behind—I. MAY CAUSE DECESSION. Israel remembered the fleshpots of Egypt and turned back and tempted God. Lot's wife looked back and perished. Many in answer to Christ's call say, "Suffer me first to—." Rich young ruler. 1. Former character and prospects have to be forgotten. 2. Former sins. 3. Former companionships, or they may draw the soul back to perdition. II. MAY FOSTER SELF-SATISFACTION AND PRIDE. 1. Victories achieved; temptations resisted elated Samson to his hurt. Even when the glory is given to God there is apt to be a ring of self-satisfaction, "I am not as other men." If we have taken a gun from the enemy, let us go and take another, and not sit idly down. 2. Sacrifices may become a cause of pride—"Lord, we have left all and followed Thee." Yet what does the "all" amount to. 3. So of trials. 4. Of attainments. We may say of ourselves, "Well done, good and faithful servant." But whatever they are, they are as nothing compared with what is before; and inasmuch as they are all of grace, we have nothing to glory of. 5. Past enjoyments. 6. The people we have left. "If any man love father or mother more than Me," &c. III. MAY LEAD TO DISCOURAGEMENT. 1. Falls and failures: no use trying any more. 2. Difficulties and dangers: David thought he would one day fall by the hand of Saul. 3. Guilt contracted; time lost; work undone; salvation neglected; resolutions broken; convictions stifled—all this and much more may be behind. But brooding is no more to be encouraged than boasting. Start afresh. (*J. Smith, M.A.*) *Forgetting the things that are behind*:—We are as children taught as in a play; instructed by toys and pictures. But the day does come when the form should be lost to us in the reality, the letter lost in the spirit. The bird must forget its nest, the seed its husk, the flower its bud. The tree may be full of bloom, and an orchard is a beauteous sight, but the blossom must wither away and be forgotten in the fruit. These things get behind, they pertain to the past, and are of it. The bud must burst, the flower blow, the nest foul. That in which the seeds of things were bound and nourished must become a dried and worthless skin; and the finest foliage must fade; and to such things it is unwise to hold. They should be forgotten, and, whether you forget them or not (and some men never do), they are sure to get behind; and if you do not forget them you are behind also, and can never reach the goal. (*W. Hubbard.*) *Look not at the past*:—We are like one sailing down a rapid stream, intensely anxious as to the issue of our voyage, and fearful of the dangers which await us, and yet turning our backs on both, and trying to derive encouragement from gazing at that portion of our course already past, and every moment growing less and less visible. Of what avail, to such a mariner, is even a distinct view of some distant point long since swept by, when his vessel is approaching some perilous pass, or passing through some vast and foaming estuary into the deep sea. Oh, surely it is then time to forget what is past, and to bend forward to reach forth to that which is before. (*J. W. Alexander, D.D.*) *Forget past sorrows*:—A writer tells how years, long years before, he cut the initials of his name in the bark of a tree, and after many years he came and trod through the tasselled grass to the grey old beech-tree where he had whittled his boyish name. The blackbirds were singing among the alders, the green foliage of the branches spread above, the green carpet spread a sward below, and through the interlacing boughs were glimpses of the ancient blue of the firmament; but when he found the tree he could not discover the letters of his name, only a curious scar in the bark. So the scars of the heart heal over; and, indeed, however sorrowful and bitter a man's experiences, he must be a woful and a miserable man who, in this world of great interests, can find nothing to talk of but his own griefs, the neglect he has received, the extortions and vexations by which he has suffered. What a petty world such a man must live in; under what a low sky he must walk; in what a muggy

atmosphere he must breathe. Oh, let us remember that hate is transitory, is temporal, like the scar on the bark of a tree; but love, goodwill, is eternal, like the grey old firmament, which, old as it is, was never younger than it is to-day. "Forget the things which are behind." There is strength in forgetting; "let the dead bury their dead." We can only be cheerful while we forget. (*Paxton Hood.*) *The memory of past sorrows not to obliterate the appreciation of present mercies:—*I once crossed the "Warm Spring Mountain" in the early morning. The sun was just rising. All the valley between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies was filled with a silvery mist, level at the surface as a sea-line. But above the horizontal sea, three or four mountain peaks projected themselves like islands dotting the expanse. Thus it is with the memories of past sorrows. They emerge from the sea which has swallowed up so much else. We cannot forget our early griefs and bereavements. But we must not permit them to obliterate the appreciation of present mercies. We must hear the voice of the Master, saying, Thy brother, thy sister, thy child shall rise again. Remembered griefs are prophetic of coming joys. Forgetting the things which are behind we press forward to the time when "we shall be ever with one another and with the Lord." (*M. D. Hoge, D.D.*) *The sense in which the past cannot be forgotten:—*Paul could not have meant that he literally forgot the past, for had he done so, both present and future would have been alike useless to him. The past is the sculptor, the ten thousand touches of whose chisel have given to our present lives the shapes they wear; it is the painter too that has coloured these forms with every tint and hue they bear. All the influences that have made our actual characters what they now are came out of the past, just as the seed sown in earlier seasons, with their sunshine and rain, make the subsequent harvest. Were we to forget past knowledge, ours would be the ignorance of infancy; if past experiences were obliterated, our imbecility would be that of idiocy. If history is philosophy teaching by example, the erasure of the remembrance of the events of our own history would strip both philosophy and religion of the power to teach at all. (*Ibid.*) *The hindering force of past habit:—*You find some certain type of Christian character, or exercise of Christian grace, that is easy and natural to you, and you come to know how to do it. It becomes your special habit, which is all right, but it also tends to become your limit, which is wrong. Habits are like fences, very good to guard the soul from sudden incursions of trespassers, but very bad when the trunk has grown up and presses against their stubborn rings. And many of us simply keep on doing the narrow round of things that we fancy we can do well, or have always been in the way of doing, like barrel-organs, grinding our poor little set of tunes, without any notion of the great sea of music that stretches all round about us, and which is not pegged out upon our cylinders at all. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The danger of looking back:—*There may have been floating in the apostle's mind, combined with the image of the racer, some remembrance of the old story in the Book of Genesis about Lot's wife. She looked back, and as she stood there gazing behind her, precious time was irrevocably lost, the fugitives swept on in front, and the swift-flying death that struck her with terror, as she saw it pressing close behind, caught her up. She was whelmed in the fiery destruction that filled the air; and as the shower of ashes at Pompeii moulded themselves over the forms of the poor wretches that were smothered by them, and preserved till to-day the print of the very waves of their hair and the texture of their dress, "salt" was crusted round that living core, and she perished, because she wasted in trembling retrospect the flying moments which, rightly used, would have set her in safety. (*Ibid.*) *Reaching forth to the things which are before:—*All things are prospective. The impulse of a river is ever onward. So of all things physical and intellectual. The world's building was prospective. Animal organism reads onward toward the image of God. Everything in earth's geology, and everything on earth's surface, point towards a future. The little child is telling what he intends when he is a man. Thoughts fly on wings toward the to-morrow. The affections, the adhesive powers of the soul, speak the same language. Now, why all this? What does it mean? It must mean something. It means that there is a future and a God. God has gone that way. He has passed through, and these are His footprints. If there is no God, no future, let the atheist tell us what the meaning is. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The things that are before:—*I. THERE ARE THINGS BEFORE EVERY CHRISTIAN towards which he is proceeding. There is childhood, youth, manhood in Christian life. Here you see the difference between a self-deceiver and a Christian. There is no growth before a hypocrite any more than there is in an artificial flower. He may

change, but there is no life in him, and therefore he cannot advance. There are things before him. 1. As one endowed with talents which must be ceaselessly used. God gives him opportunities. He must use them. Some do not see their opportunities because their eyes are shut: some see their opportunities but do not use them, because they are indolent or their talents rusty from long disuse. 2. As one exposed to fresh demands on principles and powers of all kinds. The exhibition of new phases of character is before him. He may not have known much trouble, but he has to undergo the discipline of suffering. Then in working there has not been much demand made on patience. 3. As one must continue to the end.

4. Death. 5. The everlasting kingdom. II. THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS BEFORE EVERY CHURCH. The body is not one member but many. Before the Church, therefore, is—1. The real, conscious, manifested unity of all its members. To join the Church is not sufficient, you must contribute to its life. 2. Continued and ever improving mutual service. Each is to help the others. 3. The increase of itself.

4. An extending and improving influence on society. 5. An increasing ministration to the whole body of Christ. 6. The preaching of the gospel to every creature. III. While certain things are before every Christian and every Church, PARTICULAR THINGS ARE BEFORE PARTICULAR CHRISTIANS AND CHURCHES. Every mineral is not a diamond. Every star is not a sun. (S. Martin.) Paul reached forth to the things before. I. AS REGARDED HIS OWN IMPROVEMENT. He sought.—

1. Absolute pardon. Continued demerit calls for continued mercy. 2. Absolute assurance of forgiveness. 3. Absolute conformity to the Divine character and will as immediately and specifically exhibited in Christ. 4. The fellowship of the Spirit in all its perfection. 5. A perfect accordance in present action with the prospect of the great day. II. AS REGARDED A DIFFUSIVE USEFULNESS. The same perfection he aimed at for himself he aimed at for "every man" (Col. i. 28). (D. King, LL.D.)

The racer as charioteer:—St. Paul is like one of those eager charioteers of whom his guardsmen so often spoke to him when they had returned from the contests in the Circus Maximus, and joined their shouts to those of the myriads who cheered their favourite colours—leaning forward in his flying car, bending over the shaken rein and the goaded steed, forgetting everything—every peril, every competitor, every circling of the meta in the rear, as he pressed on for the goal by which sat the judges with the palm garlands that formed the prize. (Archdeacon Farrar.)

The racer as runner:—The picture is that of a racer in his agony of struggle and hope. You see him!—every muscle strained and every vein starting—the quick and short heaving of his chest—the big drops gathered on his brow—his body bending forward, as if with frantic gesture he already clutched the goal—his eye, now glancing aside with a momentary sparkle at objects so rapidly disappearing behind him, and then fixing itself on the garland in eager anticipation. The apostle is not leaving, he is forgetting the things behind; he is not merely looking, he is reaching forth unto the things before; not only does he run, he presses toward the mark; nor was he occupied, weakened, or delayed by a variety of pursuits—"This one thing I do." (Prof. Eadie.)

Pressing forward:—The idea is that of a man stretching himself out towards something as a runner does, with his body straining forward, the hand and the eye drawn onward towards the goal. He does not think of the furlongs that he has passed, he heeds not the nature of the ground over which he runs. The sharp stones in the path do not stay him, nor the flowerets in the grass catch his glance. The white faces of the crowd around the course are seen as in a flash as he rushes past them to the winning-post, and the parsley-garland that hangs there is all that he is conscious of. "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." Let us, with eye and hand flung forward, "stretch out towards the things that are before," and imitate that example—not in the fierce whirl of excitement, indeed, but in fixed regard to, and concentrated desire of, the mark and the prize. (A. Maclaren, D.D.)

Christian perfection is like those problems in mathematics where we can never find the true answer. We may go on working the sum for years, and though each succeeding figure brings us nearer to it, we can never actually reach it. (H. Melvil, B.D.)

The varied means of obtaining perfection:—Perfection is being, not doing—it is not to effect an act but to achieve a character. If the aim of life were to do something, then, as in an earthly business, except in doing this one thing the business would be at a standstill. The student is not doing the one thing of student-life when he has ceased to think or read. The labourer leaves his work undone when the spade is not in his hand, and he sits beneath the hedge to rest. But in Christian life, every moment and every act is an opportunity for doing the one thing of becoming

Christ-like. Every day is full of a most impressive experience. Every temptation to evil temper which can assail us to-day will be an opportunity to decide the question whether we shall gain the calmness and the rest of Christ, or whether we shall be tossed by the restlessness and agitation of the world. Nay, the very vicissitudes of the seasons, day and night, heat and cold, affecting us variably, and producing exhilaration or depression, are so contrived as to conduce towards the being which we become, and decide whether we shall be masters of ourselves, or whether we shall be swept at the mercy of accident and circumstance, miserably susceptible of merely outward influences. Infinite as are the varieties of life, so manifold are the paths to saintly character; and he who has not found out how directly or indirectly to make everything converge towards his soul's sanctification, has as yet missed the meaning of this life. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Practice necessary to perfection*:—A neighbour near my study persists in practising upon the flute. He bores my ears as with an augur, and renders it almost an impossibility to think. Up and down the scale he remorselessly runs, until even the calamity of temporary deafness would almost be welcome to me. Yet he teaches me that I must practise if I would be perfect; must exercise myself unto godliness if I would be skilful; must, in fact, make myself familiar with the Word of God, with holy living, and saintly dying. Such practice, moreover, will be as charming as my neighbour's flute is intolerable. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Singleness of aim*:—Confucius's son once said to him, "I apply myself with diligence to every kind of study, and neglect nothing that could render me clever and ingenious; but still I do not advance." "Omit some of your pursuits," replied Confucius, "and you will get on better. Among those who travel constantly on foot, have you ever observed any who run? It is essential to do everything in order, and only grasp that which is within the reach of your arm; for otherwise you give yourself useless trouble. Those who, like yourself, desire to do everything in one day, do nothing to the end of their lives, while others who steadily adhere to one pursuit find that they have accomplished their purpose." *Singleness of aim*:—"Mr. A. often laughs at me," said Professor Henry once, in Princeton College Laboratory, "because I have but one idea. He talks about everything, aims to excel in many things; but I have learned that if I ever make a breach, I must play my guns continually on one point." *The power of a single aim*:—Paul's experience teaches us that one unmutated and entire idea is as much as a man can entertain in his soul, or actualize in his lifetime. Nor herein was Paul's experience anomalous. Such has been the experience as well of all truly efficient men. None of them ever entertained more than one great aim or purpose of being. Noah was a man of one idea. His idea was an ark! And though he did other things, yet the one great thought, moving as a glorious dream through all his chambers of imagery, was something that would float upon stormy and shoreless seas! And this one thing he did—he built. Abraham was of this class. His one idea was a city. He, too, did other things; he trained his servants, commanded his household after him, &c. But amidst his fairest dreams by the ancestral waters, a great voice out of heaven spake to him of "a city which hath foundations, whose builder was God." And evermore afterwards he journeyed towards that city. Nor of regenerated men only is the thought true—of all men who retain amid their moral ruins some lines of the mutilated Divine image—is this a characteristic. A singleness of aim and effort ever hath been—ever will be—the secret of all noble human accomplishment. Napoleon was the most efficient man of his own time, not because gifted above his fellows, either physically or intellectually, but because universal empire was his single aim—he lived only to conquer! Demosthenes was the prince of all earth's orators, not because God gave him a splendid voice, and exquisite grace of motion, but because eloquence was his one idea. He lived only to sweep, as with a roused tempest, over all the Æolian sympathies of the human heart. Newton was the king of astronomers, not because his eye was keener as it scanned the heavens, nor because God gave him mighty wings to sweep through the empyrean, but because, with the power of an omnipresent dream, the constellations of heaven were flashing on his soul! The stars were in his heart. His life was in the stars. So is it ever: singleness of aim, oneness of effort—the gathering of thought, feeling, heart, soul, life into one intense absorbing passion—is the secret of all greatness. And no wonder that Paul was the very chief of the apostles, so that the earth shook at his tread, as when a giant goes on pilgrimage; not because he had read Grecian lore in Cilician schools, and mastered the Hebrew law at Gamaliel's feet, but because, with his heart all afire within him, and his eye, as the eagle's on the sun, fixed on one sublime pur-

pose—in that one thing he gloried—to that one thing he tended. (*C. Wadsworth.*) *The nobility of a single aim*:—What a noble thing any life becomes that has driven through it the strength of a uniting single purpose, like a strong shaft of iron bolting together the two tottering walls of some old building! (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The importance of a high aim*:—The life of man is a vagrant, changeful, desultoriness; like that of children sporting on an enamelled meadow, chasing now a painted butterfly, which loses its charm by being caught—now a wreath of mist, which falls damp upon the hand with disappointment—now a feather of thistle-down, which is crushed in the grasp. In the midst of all this fickleness, St. Paul had found a purpose to which he gave the undivided energy of his soul. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Progress*:—Look at the machine stamped with the date of half-a-dozen different patents in consecutive years, and see there the image of the diligent inventor bent on alternate excellence, to whom each improvement makes a stepping-stone to another improvement, and each difficulty mastered gives greater skill to master the remaining difficulty, until the original creative idea is rounded out in a consummate instrument. Such is the true life of the spirit conformed to the Divine law of progress—not a drift, but a race; not a dream, but a study; not self-contentment, but self-criticism and self-improvement, with the eye on the Divine model, and constantly saying to itself, “This one thing I do.” (*J. M. Whiton, Ph. D.*) *Progress more than motion*:—Progress is the great law of life, but by those even who say so, its principle is not always seen. Progress—what do you mean by that?—is it in the increase of the quantity of material productions? is it in the growth of a nation in the numbers of its population, or in its territory? is it in the advance of agriculture or manufactures? is it in the increase of the superior quality of material appliances? is it in the increase of knowledge, of science, of art? is it in the evolution of the man from the child? the philosopher from the savage? Oh, there is something more and higher than all this and these. Men forget it is with us as it is with our planet. There is a circular movement in which all motions turn on themselves, and return to the point from whence they first set out, and then there is an onward movement, as when the whole system is borne upward into infinite space. It is so with man; he is the subject of a succession of events, that which hath been is now and shall be. How wonderfully the preacher in Ecclesiastes describes this circular movement (chap. i. 5). (*Paxton Hood.*) *The onward movement of the soul*:—Man is the creature of the same senses; he beholds the same sun, the same streams, and flying clouds; youth succeeds to infancy, and the festival of nature is followed by decay. We live on food, the blood circulates through the frame; and all these motions return on themselves; but there is another motion in man, there is an onward movement—he is a being of religious instincts; and to foster and fan their flames is the end of all religious services and exercises. Oh, is it not sad when the onward movement of the soul is forgotten! The world is good for an inn; but an inn is not a home; and it is unwise to lay any plan of life in which provision is not made for the infinite future of the soul. Do you not see how every good thing takes hold of and leans upon a higher thing? how civilization leans on morality? As a child leans on a parent, and a wife on a husband, and a husband on a wife, and so at last all things lean on God; and well it is that it is so, for he can at any time take off the wheels of the most rapid chariot, He can break the wings of the proudest ambition, and He is, in fact, constantly saying, “Arise, this is not your rest.” (*Ibid.*) *Christian progress as it nears its end*:—Rivers do not grow shallower as they roll away from their sources, and so it has been well said, the heart’s river ought not to be an exception. It should flow on widening and deepening till it meets the ocean and mingles with it. (*M. D. Hoge, D.D.*) *Christian progress impelled by a single purpose*:—You have stood upon our shores, and seen a ship under full press of sail making for her destination. How she throws aside the seaweed and the waves—how straight amidst the currents she holds her bow—how she strains upon her way, and goes resolutely to her point! The winds are strong, but the helm overrules the winds, and turns them to account. Life is going on on board that vessel in many forms, but they are all moving on together to the port—there is a master principle which everything obeys, and they all delight to have it so. And as that ship pursues her bent and often homeward course, it is an emblem to you every day you look at it, of the condition of the life of that man who has had the grace given him to say, “This one thing I do.” For so, by just such singleness of purpose, such independence of external things, such a straight, unbending way, the great purpose of life is to be gained, heaven is to be won, and God glorified. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

The enemy will advance if the Christian does not:—The Confederate General Longstreet, during the battle of Gettysburg, had one of his generals come up to him and report that he was unable to bring up his men again so as to charge the enemy. "Very well," said the general, "just let them remain where they are; the enemy's going to advance, and will spare you the trouble." (*W. Bazendale.*) *Progress inevitable to the Christian:*—If the spark which grace has kindled had been left to itself, or to the feeble breath of mortals to preserve it, we might well suppose that nothing more than its continued existence was intended; but when we find an unbroken current of life-giving air from the breath of the Almighty brought to play upon that spark, we may conclude with safety that it was meant to glow and kindle to a flame, and that the flame was meant to rise and spread, and to become a conflagration; so that what at first was but a seed of fire, smothered in ashes, drenched in rain, or blown at random by the viewless winds, shall yet light up the whole horizon, and dye the very heavens with its crimson. (*J. A. Alexander, D.D.*) *Progress unlimited for the Christian:*—No bounds can be set to that progress of growth. There is no point on that happy voyage, beyond which icy cliffs and a frozen ocean forbid a passage; but before us, to the verge of our horizon of to-day, stretch the open waters; and when that furthest point of vision lies as far astern as it now gleams ahead, the same boundless sapphire sea will draw our yearning desires, and bear onwards our advancing powers. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Progress in heaven:*—I believe that we shall live through all the eternities that are before us, growing wiser, nobler, stronger, greater; plunging deeper into God, and being more and more filled with more and more of Him. So we shall move for ever as in ascending spirals that rise ever higher, and draw ever closer to the throne we compass and to Him that dwells alone; ever perfect, yet ever growing, for we have an inexhaustible Saviour to absorb into our hearts, and we have hearts that never reach the ultimate term and bound of their indefinite possibility of receiving. (*Ibid.*) *Dissatisfaction the motive of progress:*—Dissatisfaction is always the first step in improvement. Dissatisfied with the pen, man invented the printing press. Dissatisfied with the chariot, man careers on the locomotive. Dissatisfied with the velocity even of steam, man links his thoughts to God's thunderbolts! This, in regard of all things, is the true inspiration. A being fully contented with present attainments, with no aspirations unto things above and beyond him, should be either a god or an idiot! Heaven's pity on the poor soul on this earth all restful and satisfied! Genius—the most Godlike of intellectual gifts, is only this restless creative agony—an impulse driving the spirit to beat its wings like an imprisoned eagle, till there be blood on the plumes and the wires of the prison-house; forcing the yearning heart abroad like an unblessed spirit, away from the actual in search of the possible; to dig in every desert for a living spring; to climb every mountain-top for a farther look into heaven. Cæsar was the very demi-god of his generation, because a possessed world could not satisfy him. Paul was the very chief of the apostles, because, sick of all present attainments, he "counted himself not to have apprehended." (*C. Wadsworth.*) *A noble despair:*—"During the nine years that I was his wife," says the widow of the great artist Opie, "I never saw him satisfied with one of his productions, and often, very often, have I seen him enter my sitting-room, and throwing himself in an agony of despondence on the sofa, exclaim, 'I never, never shall be a painter as long as I live!'" It was a noble despair, such as is never felt by the self-complacent daubers of sign-boards, and it bore the panting aspirant up to one of the highest niches in the artistic annals of his country. The selfsame dissatisfaction with present attainments is a potent force to bear the Christian onward to the most eminent degree of spirituality and holiness. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The passion for progress:*—It has been said that "no other word turns up so often in the speeches of Albert the Good as that of progress, no other idea was so constantly in his mind; and that no sacrifice of time, thought, money, or responsibility seemed to him too great when he could make it the cause of national or individual progress." (*J. F. B. Tinsling, B.A.*) *Forward the true direction:*—Livingstone having broken fresh ground among the Bakhatlas, wrote to the London Missionary Society explaining what he had done, and expressing the hope of their approval. At the same time he said he was at their disposal to go anywhere—provided it be forward. (*Ibid.*) *The unreasonableness of non-progressiveness:*—To stay complacently where we are in the religious life is as if a tree should congratulate itself on being higher than the shrubs, on its green leaves, on its glowing blossoms, whilst all the time it has not known the supreme coronation of the summer fruits; or it is as if a caterpillar should stay

exultant with its spots and stripes, its fine silks, its succulent cabbage-leaf, whilst all the glorious life of the butterfly on the burning roses is untasted. The best we have known is low, poor, dim, narrow, insipid, compared with the larger experiences which await us in Christ. Say not "you will rest on your laurels." Your moral laurels to-day are only bits of straw and flowers of grass. Keep putting those laurels from you; look up, toil on, press forward, until your brow wear the amaranth of full and immortal perfection. (*W. L. Watkinson.*)

Vers. 15-19. Let us therefore.—*The imitation of Paul*.—I. THE GENERAL EXHORTATION INCLUDES THEM ALL WITH HIMSELF. 1. The fundamental principle of all "perfect," *i.e.*, well-instructed and mature Christians, must be to count the goal of religion the attainment of Christ, and the blessedness of religion the practical end of life. Those are perfect who have already finished their course as far as it leads through carnal ordinances, and from them to Christ the end of the law. They have this preparatory or first perfection, in that they have put away childish things (1 Cor. xiii. 11), became spiritual (1 Cor. ii. 6), and are so far made perfect in grace. This is one of several designations, such as "adult," "strong," &c., which mark those who have entered in the course, and has no more reference to moral perfection than "saints" has to sanctity. 2. This preliminary perfection is quite consistent with much lingering imperfection. It was quite possible that some of them might give up old dependance on the law while retaining some of the beggarly elements. But the apostle expresses his hope that in every minor particular, as in the fundamental principle, they would be brought to think rightly. But the condition is that they continued "thus minded" as to the great essential. Those who "will to do His will shall know of the doctrine," was the Saviour's promise, and St. Paul here gives us only another version of the same promise. Those whose hearts are clear as to the ruling principle and aim of life shall, if they seek the guidance of the Divine Spirit, the source of the greater as well as of the lesser revelations, shall never be suffered to go astray. 3. The life must perseveringly conform to the great principle if this promise is to be fulfilled (ver. 16). Those who have the right aim in their Christian life must walk by it still, whatever the measure of their progress be. The plough must be held to the end of the furrow; to look back is to be unfit for the kingdom of God. II. ST. PAUL EXHORTS THEM TO COPY HIS EXAMPLE, and that of all true Christians of whom he made himself the representative. 1. "Be ye imitators together." The emphasis of their union in this imitation is in danger of being lost unless we consider the deep purpose of it. Very much of the blessedness and strength of religion is the result of close compact fellowship. The Philippians must unite and stir each other up to emulation in this matter, in case of any defection; warning each other, and generally making this imitation the subject of common effort. The apostle knows how effectual a stimulant is the holy example of the saints. 2. This emulous and united imitation of the apostle is enforced by a vivid and pathetic description of the practical Judaizers who were otherwise minded. They are to be "marked" in the particulars which miserably distinguished them from the apostolic standard. Their life and walk were to be studied and compared with a better model. Before St. Paul had depicted the evil of their doctrine; now he points to their practice. They are enemies of the Cross in their spirit, desires, aims, conduct, and whole compass of their being. They were not referred to as a distinct class; they are diffused through the churches as an unholy leaven. 3. Nothing so stirred the apostle's soul as men's opposition to the Cross. He estimated all things by their relation to the atonement. 4. It is their end that first fills his thought, because he had just been paying tribute to the "end of the Lord" in the resurrection of the saints. That end was destruction (1 Cor. i. 19; Phil. i. 18; Rom. i. 22-23). 5. Many of the Gentile moralists had used these very words to condemn Epicureanism. "The worship of the belly" had become a current phrase (1 Rom. xvi. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 22). While he wept over their unspeakable folly and coming end, he mourned over their degradation—"whose glory," &c. 6. The real secret of the dissolute living of these enemies of the Cross lies in the words "who mind earthly things." Mind means intellect and heart. The contrast is presented in Colossians iii. 2. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *Perfection*.—I. HOW FAR ATTAINABLE. II. CANNOT BE ABSOLUTE. III. CONSISTS WITH DIFFERENCE OF OPINION. IV. IS DISTINGUISHED BY CHARITY. The apostle does not despise those who differ from him, but is sure they will receive clearer light. V. IS DETERMINED BY CONSTANCY

AND PERSEVERANCE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *True religion frees men from dangerous errors*.—I. THERE IS THAT IN RELIGION WHICH IS NECESSARY, FIXED, IMMUTABLE, AND CLEAR, ABOUT WHICH GOOD MEN ("perfect") DO NOT DIFFER—the things which are—1. Perfectly agreeable to the Divine nature. 2. Perfectly agreeable to human nature. (1) The great materials of natural light. (2) The great articles of the Christian faith. II. THERE IS ALSO IN RELIGION THAT WHICH IS NOT SO NECESSARY, IMMUTABLE, AND CLEAR, IN WHICH GOOD MEN MAY BE OTHERWISE MINDED. Here we may note—1. The causes of error. (1) The creature's fallibility. (2) Accidental prejudices from education, converse, strong imagination, melancholy, intellectual weakness, affectation, singularity, worldly interest. (3) The darkness of things themselves: as where there is less of reason to be said for a thing, or where the rule of faith is short. Here the rule is so far as God has not determined we are referred to reason; and where both reason and revelation seem silent our proper course is stay and expectance rather than peremptory conclusion. 'Tis hard to get rid of an error, therefore, take heed of admitting one. (4) Non-improvement of intellectuals. Men are greatly encumbered by business, and others do not think and examine. (5) The want of necessary helps, as friends, books, freedom of converse, and opportunity. It betters men's health to live and breathe in a free and open air. Had some but once heard a suggestion to the contrary they had escaped their mistakes. The greatest help is God's Spirit, and the next, searching company. 2. The preservatives against error are—(1) Care of right information. We owe this to truth, and to our own souls. (2) Modesty and humility (Psa. xxv. 9; Prov. iii. 34; 1 Peter iii. 18). He is not likely to learn who is not of a teachable spirit. (3) A general intention to entertain and submit to all truth whatsoever and whensoever it shall appear, and an implicit faith in God where the sense of any text is not clear. (4) An ingenuous dealing with truth, and love of it for itself, both in respect of the ground on which you receive it, and the use which you make of it. (5) A perception of the fatal issue of wilfulness and wantonness of opinion in the shameful miscarriages of such as have given themselves up to dreams and fancies—as the Munster Anabaptists and the ancient Gnostics. 3. The uses to be made of this. (1) Let us live in the sense of our own fallibility: this will make us temperate and cautious. Infallibility is a crooked principle. (2) Although error be nowhere to be countenanced, yet it is not everywhere severely to be challenged (Gal. vi. 1; John viii. 7; Acts iii. 17). The best are liable to mistakes. (3) We have not done our task in the world till we are well-informed in our judgment concerning right and wrong, till we are refined in spirit to relish and taste; and reformed in life to do and practise. III. THERE IS REASON TO THINK THAT GOD WILL BRING OUT OF PARTICULAR MISTAKE HIM THAT IS RIGHT IN THE MAIN. "God shall reveal," &c. This is spoken reasonably and becomingly in respect to God, and hopefully and charitably in regard to man; not as prophetic, but as likely and credible. 1. On God's part: because—(1) of God's relation to us as Father and Teacher. Men look up to Him for bodily food; why not for intellectual communications. (2) God has so declared and promised (Psa. xxv. 9; Prov. iii. 33; James iv. 6; 1 Peter v. 5; John viii. 17; xvi. 13). (3) God begins with us with intention to go on if we be not perverse and wilful (John xvi. 12). In the case before us God had begun, and they were resolved to press toward the mark. 2. On our part. By truth already received we have a double advantage for receiving more. (1) The way to the understanding, which was obstructed, has been opened. (2) The mind is brought into a disposition to receive all Divine truth. 3. On the part of truth, because—(1) Truth is connatural to our souls. (2) The several truths mutually depend on each other; one helping to the discovery of another, and each being declaratory and convictive of the same error. 4. Here it is to be observed—(1) That this is more for the certain guidance of any honest man than he can in Scripture show for his infallibility who usurps the title of head of the Church. (2) That we have warrant to think and speak things worthy of God, and tending to our encouragement in good behaviour. 5. Lest I should give any advantage to enthusiasm I superadd—(1) Keep within the compass of the case. The condition here is that we press toward the mark, and God's blessings are conditional everywhere. (2) Put off pride. The full soul loathes the honeycomb. Presumption and conceit wholly indispose men for learning (Psa. xxv. 9; iii. 7). (3) "God will reveal," does not necessarily import immediate inspiration. One way or other is the course of His providence, and by some instrument or lover of truth we shall be told what we have to do (Acts

viii. 35). (4) Where knowledge is pursued by practice there is other expectation than from speculation alone (John vii. 17; Acts v. 32). 6. Inferences: (1) The purity of a man's mind, the sincerity of his intention, the honesty of his heart, are his great security. (2) In ways of uprightness and integrity we may presume upon God's leading us into all the truth we are required to know. (3) Give a fair amount of patience to those who mean well. IV. THOSE WHO AGREE IN THE MAIN, BUT DIFFER IN OTHER PARTICULARS, OUGHT NEVERTHELESS TO HOLD TOGETHER (ver. 16). There is harmony, notwithstanding difference in some apprehensions, in all degrees of perfection. 1. This is a representation of the heavenly state. There is no discord there, and, therefore, there should be accord in those who are citizens of heaven (Phil. iii. 20). 2. It is the cause of religion (James iii. 17; Psa. cxxxi. 1-2). It is a scandal to the world when professors do not agree, making strangers ask with Pilate, "What is truth?" Disagreement has tired out the best of men. Good-tempered Melancthon's satisfaction when he came to die was that he was free "from temptation to sin, from the troubles of the world, and from the fury of the theologies." It was Origen's argument against Celsus that through the virtue and efficacy of religion the state of the Church was calm and quiet, whereas other states were turbulent (2 Cor. xii. 20). 3. It is the conversation of Christians with each other for mutual gain and advantage. (1) For spiritual edification, whereas if variance obtains there will be alienation of hearts and suspension of Christian acts (Mal. iii. 26). (2) For their better subsistence is an evil world. Foreign opposition and force cannot do the mischief that internal feuds may. (3) There is more hearts-ease and quiet of mind. 4. This prevents all mischiefs which infect humanity, such as factions, suspicions, heart-burnings, plottings, competitions, and envious comparisons; whereas there should be but one division—the Church and the world. 5. Objections. (1) We do not think alike. Nor do we in other matters. There are different opinions in philosophy. There are different constellations. We differ in age, stature, feature, &c. These varieties display the wisdom of the Creator. Yet all agreeing in human nature we are fit companions for each other. Why then should not they who meet in the regenerate nature and agree in the articles of faith and principle of good life, overlook subordinate differences. (2) Errors are dangerous. (a) That is not thy charge but His. To say what is fit to persuade is all thou canst do; the rest must remain with God. (b) Since all things that are necessary to salvation are in the Holy Scriptures, none but those who are gross neglectors err dangerously. (3) But where is zeal for God and truth. This has its principal operation on one's self, and shows itself on others in the strength of argument, reasonable and renewed proposals. 6. Suggestions. (1) All that are right in the main are virtually informed by the same spirit, and the things they agree in are far more and weighty than those wherein they differ. (2) Why should men differ in religion, which is the greatest bond of union? (3) Why should we be aggrieved, when every one uses but his own right, and every man has a right of judging if he be capable? (4) Why dost thou lay so much stress upon difference in such points wherein if thou art temperate and sober thou art afraid peremptorily to assert? (5) Hast thou never erred? (6) Will difference produce the harmony thou seekest? (7) Is it safe to reject a man whom we cannot conclude God has cast off? (8) Why should I think that essential in another which I dare not assert is necessary for my acceptance with God. (9) I came leisurely to knowledge myself, may not days teach my neighbour wisdom? (10) What was I taught of God for but to teach others? (Luke xxii. 32; Eccles. iv. 9-12). (11) Shall we disown that which is good in them because they are not such as we would have them? (12) Do not many differences arise from constitution and circumstances rather than from perversity? (13) Why part from them on earth whom we may meet with in heaven? 7. Cautions. (1) Great reverence is to be given to superiors. Government is not to be disturbed upon pretence of private judgment. (2) No disturbance must thence arise to the Church of God (1 Cor. xi. 16). (3) 'Tis safer to err in an error that is common than in one which is personal. (4) It becomes the modesty of particular persons when their sentiments are singular to bethink themselves better. (B. Whichcote, D.D.) *The temper to be cultivated by Christians of different denominations towards each other:—1. Paul ever kept the dictates of his elevated and inspired judgment under the guidance of Christian kindness. He permits no part of the Christian character to be abridged by another. He never allows his earnestness in maintaining truth and opposing error so betray him into bitterness; nor does he permit*

his generosity to impair his faithfulness. 2. Our text is a happy combination of these qualities, and is an enforcement of them on others. Were we to imitate them there would be an end of our unhappy dissensions on religious matters.

I. THERE IS A GREAT AND GROWING NUMBER OF THOSE WITH WHOM WE SHOULD CONSCIENTIOUSLY UNITE. Look around and see how many there are who are perfect and thus minded in reference to the most important matters. The rule then should be the rule now (vers. 8-14). 1. We ought to seek and cultivate the society of such, by friendly association and public communion, &c. 2. Let us use the means to promote the mutual improvement of such and of ourselves. 3. Let us do all we can to render our reciprocal union more perfect and our usefulness more extensive.

II. THERE ARE SOME WHO DIFFER FROM US IN MATTERS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE—HOW DOES THE PRINCIPLE APPLY TO THEM? To have no communion with them would be to expel them from the sacred ark into the ranks of the enemy. Those to whom the apostle refers are evidently not those who renounce and revile evangelical truth, but those whose knowledge or whose means or susceptibility for instruction are deficient. 1. Let us give a fair and comprehensive consideration to the way in which their religious characters have been formed. (1) Education may early have produced an unfavourable impression, or they may have attended an incompetent ministry. (2) We ought to pay regard to the difficulties and misapprehensions which lie in the use of words, which may be employed ambiguously or ignorantly. (3) We should reflect what would probably have been the effect upon our minds had we been placed in their circumstances. (4) When we see in them the apparent evidences of real holiness let us not be backward to acknowledge it. 2. How we ought to act towards them. (1) With justice. Let us not misrepresent them, nor exaggerate the differences between us. (2) With kindness. Let us see that our temper be sweet and our manner pleasing. (3) We should take great care to prevent them imagining that we maintain salvation to be suspended on a mere theoretical belief of some points of doctrine.

III. THERE ARE CHRISTIANS FROM WHOM WE DIFFER ON MATTERS OF SMALLER MOMENT. 1. Let us show them the most sincere and honest respect and kindness. 2. Let us cultivate friendly intercourse with them as far as they are disposed to reciprocate it. 3. Let us hold with them religious communion on proper occasions so far as our and their principles permit. 4. When we state and argue for the points in which we differ from them let us take care to deal justly by them. 5. Let us take equal pains, without intrusion, to make them correctly acquainted with our sentiments. 6. Let everything in our speaking and writing, &c., be a demonstration that we esteem the essential principle and expansive morality of the gospel infinitely above the strict bounds of controversial preciseness and ecclesiastical form. (*J. Pye Smith, D.D.*)

Ver 15. As many as be perfect be thus minded.—Christian maturity:—I. ITS SIGNS. 1. Humility. 2. Singleness of purpose. 3. Charity. **II. ITS DUTIES.** 1. Persevering effort. 2. Forbearance with others. 3. The encouragement of the weak. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

The soul's perfection:—The word "perfect" does not express the idea of moral completeness so much as that of physical maturity. It means "full-grown," as in contrast to "babes." And the perfect here are exhorted to cultivate the sense of not having "already attained," and to be constantly reaching forth to unattained heights, so that a sense of imperfection and a continual effort after higher life are parts of Paul's perfect man. And it is to be further noted that "perfect" people may be otherwise minded, and so stand in need of the hope that God would by degrees show them their divergence from His pattern.

I. THERE ARE PEOPLE WHOM WITHOUT EXAGGERATION THE JUDGMENT OF TRUTH CALLS PERFECT. In the language of the New Testament men are "saints" who had many sins, and "perfect" who had many imperfections. 1. The main thing about a character is not the degree to which it has attained completeness in its ideal, but what that ideal is. The distance a man has walked is of less consequence than the direction in which his face is turned. Men are to be ranged according to their aims rather than their achievements. The visionary who attempts something high and accomplishes little is often a nobler man than he who aims at marks on the low levels and hits them. 2. So there is a class of aims so absolutely corresponding to man's nature and relations, that to take them for one's own and to approximate to them in some measure may fairly be called the perfection of human nature. The literal force of the word "having reached the end" gives pertinence to that question. And there need be, in that case, no doubt

about the answer, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever." He who lives for God is doing what he was made and meant to do, and however imperfect, he is more nearly perfect than the fairest character against which the damning accusation may be brought, "The God in whose hand thy breath is . . . thou hast not glorified." People ask sneeringly about David, "Is this the man after God's own heart." Yes; not because religion has a different morality from that of the world (except in being higher), nor because saints make up for adultery and murder by singing psalms, but because the main set of the life was towards God. 3. Such men have in them the germ of a life which has no natural end but absolute completeness. The small seed may grow very slowly here and be only a poor bit of green, but it has Divine germinant virtue within, and waits but being carried to its own clime to flourish. II. TWO OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS PERFECTION. "Thus minded" carries us back to the preceding clauses, Think as I do of yourselves, and do as I do. 1. "Not as though I were already perfect," &c., shows us that true Christian perfection has in it a constant consciousness of imperfection. In all fields of effort, as faculty grows consciousness of insufficiency grows with it. The more we know the more we know our ignorance. Only people who never have or will do anything, or else raw apprentices, with the mercifully granted self-confidence which gets beaten out soon enough, think that they can do everything. So in Christian life, Conscience becomes more sensitive as we get nearer right; the worse a man is the less he hears it. One little stain will be conspicuous on a brightly polished blade, but if it be all dirty a dozen more or fewer will make little difference. 2. A constant striving after further advance. How vigorously this temper is put in the context. So yearning forward and setting all the current of his being, both faculty and desire, to the yet unreachd mark, the Christian man is to live. 3. This buoyant energy of hope and effort is to be the result of the consciousness of imperfection. This, however, paralyses many. Men lament their evil and slow progress and remain the same year after year. How different this from the grand wholesome completeness of Paul's view here which embraces both elements. III. THE CO-EXISTENCE OF THESE CHARACTERISTICS WITH THEIR OPPOSITES. "If in anything ye be otherwise minded" refers not to difference of opinion among themselves, but a divergence of character from the pattern set before them. If in any sense ye are unconscious of your imperfections, or are non-progressive, God will show you what you are. Plainly he supposes that a good man may pass for a time under the dominion of impulses and theories of another kind from those which rule his life. 1. He does not expect the complete and uninterrupted dominion of these higher powers. The higher life is planted, but its germination is a work of time. The conditions of our life are in conflict. Interruptions from external circumstances, struggles of flesh with spirit, are the lot even of the most advanced. 2. Such an admission does not make such interruptions less blameworthy. That piece of sharp practice, that burst of bad temper—could we have helped it or not? 3. The feelings with which we should regard sin and contradictions in ourselves and others should be so far altered by such thoughts, that we should be slow to pronounce that a man cannot be a Christian because he has done so and so. A single act, if it be in contradiction to a man's main tendency, is not necessarily an incompatibility. IV. The crowning hope that lies in these words is the certainty of a GRADUAL BUT COMPLETE ATTAINMENT of all the Christian's aspirations after God and goodness. 1. The ground of that confidence lies in no natural tendency in us or effort of ours, but solely in God. Paul is certain that "God will reveal," &c., because He is God. He has learned that God is not in the habit of leaving off His work before He has done. 2. By the discipline of daily life, merciful chastisements, His Word, the secret influences of His Spirit, &c. He will reveal to the lowly soul all that is wanting in its knowledge, and communicate to it all that is lacking in character. 3. So for us, then, the true temper is confidence in His power and will, an earnest waiting upon Him, a brave forward yearning hope, blended with a lowly consciousness of imperfection. Presumption should be as far from us as despair. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *What kind of perfection is attainable in this life:—*I. EXPLAIN THE POINT BY SEVERAL DISTINCTIONS. 1. There is a perfection of the reward and a perfection of grace. (1) Of the reward the saints will have in heaven when they are freed from all sinful weakness (1 Cor. xiii. 10; Eph. v. 17; Jude 24). This we have not in this world, but because we expect it in the next we are to labour after the highest perfection in holiness here, because allowed imperfection is a disesteem of blessedness (1 John iii. 3). He that looketh for a sinless state will get as much as he can of it now.

(2) The perfection of grace and holiness is such as the saints may attain *unto* in this life (Col. iv. 12). 2. Legal and evangelical; the one is where there is no sin, the other no guile; the one stands in an exact conformity to God's law, the other in a sincere endeavour to fulfil it; the one can endure the balance, the other only the touchstone. (1) Legal perfection is described in Gal. iii. 10, and supposes a man innocent, and requires that he keep so. This is impossible through the weakness of the flesh (Rom. viii. 3). (2) Evangelical (2 Kings xx. 3) is consistent with weakness (2 Chron. xv. 17). This all must have (1 Chron. xxviii. 9). What is done for God must be done willingly and with all the exactness possible. Some do many things that are good, but their hearts are not perfect with God (2 Chron. xxv. 2); the heart is divided between God and other things (Hos. x. 2; James i. 8).

3. Absolute and comparative. (1) That is absolutely perfect to which nothing is wanting. This is in Christ only, not in us. (a) Where there are so many relics of the flesh a man cannot be absolutely perfect (Gal. v. 17; Rom. vii. 24). (b) There is none but sometimes sin (1 Kings viii. 46; Eccles. vii. 20; James iii. 2; 1 John i. 8). (c) There is none but need the mercy of God and ought to pray for this as for daily bread (Matt. vi. 13). (2) Comparative perfection is twofold. (a) When the professors of Christianity are compared with those that live under other institutions. They that submit to Christ's terms are said to be perfect, because Christianity itself is perfection (Matt. xix. 21). (b) When compared with others of the same profession, believers are distinguished into perfect and imperfect. Though none can attain to absolute perfection, yet there are several degrees of grace, and diversities of growth (Eph. iv. 13-14; 1 Cor. ii. 6, iii. 1; xiv. 20; Heb. v. 13-14). It is a monstrous thing after many years' growth to be an infant still.

4. Of parts and of degrees. (1) Of parts, when we have all things that belong to a sincere Christian—as living creatures are perfect as soon as they are brought forth. Thus a Christian must have grace to enlighten and govern, one grace added to another (James i. 4). What is defective in parts cannot be supplied by any after-growth. Leave out any necessary grace and the new creature is maimed; some leave out temperance, or patience, or love (1 Peter 5-7). (2) Of degrees, when a thing has attained its highest pitch. So we are only perfect in heaven (Heb. xii. 23).

5. Of growth and consummation. (1) Things are said to be done when they are begun to be done (2 Cor. v. 17). And so they are said to be perfect who are in the way of perfection (2 Cor. iii. 18; iv. 16). This perfection is taken—(a) As to means (Eph. iv. 12; 1 Thess. iii. 10). (b) As to improvement of means (2 Cor. vii. 1; 2 Peter i. 8; 1 Thess. iv. 1). (2) Consummate; when after the hazards of life we are presented to Christ (Col. i. 28); and by Christ to God (Col. i. 22).

II. THE REASONS WHY WE MUST BE PERFECT. 1. We have a perfect God (Matt. v. 48) whom we are required to imitate, and therefore we must not set bounds to our holiness (1 Peter i. 15-16). 2. We have a perfect rule (Psa. xix. 7; 2 Tim. iii. 17). 3. We have a perfect Redeemer (Col. ii. 10). 4. There is a perfect reward (Eph. iv. 13).

III. THE MOTIVES OF THIS PERFECTION. 1. What you lost in Adam must be recovered in Christ, or else you dishonour your Redeemer (Rom. v. 17). 2. We pray for perfection and therefore must endeavour after it, otherwise our prayers are a mockery (Matt. vi. 8; 1 Thess. v. 23). 3. In our making covenant we purpose to do the will of God, and so must endeavour to carry it out, otherwise it is not made with a true heart (Heb. x. 22; Psa. xviii. 23; Rev. iii. 2). 4. Consider the comfort and peace of the man who presses toward perfection (Psa. xxxvii. 37).

IV. THE MEANS. 1. See that the work be begun, for there must be converting grace before confirming grace. What good will it do to blow a dead coal, or to seek strength before we have life. 2. The radical graces must be strengthened—strong faith, fervent love, lively hope. 3. Use the means with all seriousness and good conscience. (1) In the Word you have principles of faith, obligations to love, arguments of hope, and therefore are built up (Acts xx. 32). (2) The sacraments strengthen our faith and hope as a bond or vow, and excite and engage our love and obedience. (3) Prayer (1 Peter v. 10). 4. Think much and often of your perfect blessedness which you expect according to promise, which will quicken and excite you to more diligence. There will be—(1) A complete vision of God and Christ (1 Cor. xiii. 12). (2) A complete possession and fruition of God (Eph. iii. 19; 1 Cor. i. 30). (3) A complete transformation into the image of Christ (1 John iii. 2; Psa. xvii. 15). (4) A complete delectation arising from all this (Psa. xvi. 11).

V. THE NOTES. 1. When there is such a base esteem of worldly things that our affections are weakened to them every day (Gal. vi. 14). 2. When more unsatisfied with present degrees of holiness with a constant desire to grow better. 3. When

we are swayed more by love than by fear (Gal. iv. 6; 1 John iv. 18). 4. When we are more humble and see more of our defects than others do. (*T. Manton, D.D.*)

Christian perfection:—I. ITS SIGNS. 1. A base esteem of worldly privileges and honours (ver. 7). 2. A forgetting of the past and an earnest pressing towards the prize (vers. 12-13). 3. A desire for the coming of Christ, such as banishes the fear of death. 4. Sweet communion with Christ and boldness of access without fear of God's presence or judgment. 5. Stability amidst either prosperity or adversity. 6. Experience in finding out Satan's devices, whereas a beginner, for want of experience and practice, runs, ere he is aware, into many offences, and looks for no remedy. 7. Strength to stand against the bitter blasts and oppositions of the world. Nothing could move Paul or separate him from the love of Christ, but immature Christians are shaken or blown away. 8. Endurance of the infirmities of others (Gal. vi. 1). 9. Knowledge of particular wants, and hence a seeking after further supplies of grace. 10. Ability and endeavour to beget other Christians. It is the property of a grown creature to beget its like. A weak Christian has enough to do to look to himself. II. ITS MEANS. 1. We must know the order. We must first grow in fundamental graces, for we water not leaves but the root of our plants. When root graces are diligently cherished, works, like leaves, will soon put forth. 2. Whatsoever we do we must do it with the best advantage, labouring to practise as many graces as we can. 3. We must not neglect little things, small occasions of doing good, or beginnings of evil. 4. We must keep our affections to holy exercises and means, and consider what will fit our disposition when indisposed. Are we dull in prayer? Then read. If that will not be endured, use communion of saints. III. ITS MOTIVES—Consider—1. The privilege of a perfect Christian (Psa. xlv. 5). 2. The beautiful example he sets, so as to make others in love with religion. 3. The glory he secures for God. 4. The close communion he has with Christ. 5. His blessed reward. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*)

If in anything ye be otherwise minded.—*Differences of opinion*:—I. MUST NECESSARILY ARISE FROM—1. The diversity of the human mind; 2. Habit; 3. Attainment. II. OUGHT TO BE RECORDED WITH FORBEARANCE. 1. The perfect must not despise the weak. 2. The weak must not judge the perfect (Rom. xiv. 3). III. ARE BEST REMOVED BY PRAYER. God gives wisdom to all who seek it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

A persuasive to unity in things indifferent:—When God's people are divided in opinion they should not come to an open rupture. I. WHAT LENITY AND FORBEARANCE SHOULD BE USED. 1. There often are differences of opinion about lesser things in the Church, partly because of different degrees of light—all barks that sail to heaven draw not a like depth of water—and partly because of the remainders of corruption. 2. When differences arise we should take care they come not to open breach. This is the course Paul takes here. So should we, because the Church is in danger of being rent and destroyed (Gal. v. 15), because the world is scandalized (John xvii. 21), mutual means of edification hindered (Gal. iv. 16), and the power of godliness lost. 3. To prevent this all lenity must be used. This I shall state (1) as to the matter of the strife. If we agree in substantials let us go by the same rule and mind the same thing. (2) As to the persons contending there is a difference. Paul distinguishes between erring Christians and their factious guides (Phil. iii. 2). 4. The forbearance itself is not out of necessity but voluntary choice and Christian compassion, knowing that we need as much from God and others. Nor is it a forbearance of policy, till we get opportunity to suppress others (Eph. iv. 2-3). There are four graces that enforce it. (1) Lowliness—a sense of personal infirmity. (2) Meekness (James iii. 17). (3) Longsuffering. (4) Love (1 Pet. iv. 8; 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 7). 5. In this forbearance, both strong and weak have their part. (1) What they are not to do. (a) Not to leave the truth or do anything against it. Strings in tune must not be brought down to strings out of tune, but the reverse. (b) Not to connive at sin or error (Lev. xix. 17; 2 Thess. iii. 15). (2) What they are to do. (a) The strong are not to deal rigorously with the weak, but wait till God declare the truth unto them, and promote their conviction with all gentleness (Isa. xl. 11). (b) The weak are not to rend and cut themselves off from the rest of Christians, or be strange to them on every lesser dissent, but to be teachable and lay aside obstinate prejudices, and examine into the cause of the difference; and leave room for the discovery of God's mind. II. THE REASONS FOR THIS EXERCISE OF THIS LENITY AND FORBEARANCE. 1. From the necessity, excellency, and utility of union. What more clear in the Scriptures than that Christians should endeavour to be united. Christ prayed for it (John xvii. 21-23); Paul enforces it (Phil. ii. 1-2); those that cause divisions are sternly cautioned (Rom. xvi. 17-18); unity is

pressed by the most cogent arguments (Eph. iv. 4-6). 2. From the consideration of our mutual frailties. Heb. v. 2 should be verified in us (Gal. vi. 1; Rom. xiv. 1). 3. From the consideration of the probability of Divine illumination. (1) This illumination comes from God only (Acts xvi. 4; 1 Cor. iii. 6-7). Let us, then, in meekness use the means and refer the issue to God (2 Tim. ii. 25). If we force men before they are convinced it may only make hypocrites. (2) This illumination is given by degrees (Mark viii. 24-25). (3) They who are not for the present may be afterwards instructed in the truth. The apostle proceeded in the hopes of that. (a) Upon the supposition that they were already converted (chap. i. 6). (b) That they were humble and tractable (Psa. xxv. 9). (c) That they will not neglect any means of study and prayer (Prov. ii. 4; Psa. cxix. 18). (d) That they continue in the communion of the Church. (e) That they walk according to their light (John vii. 17). 4. From the temper of those who are perfect. A grounded Christian bears with the infirmity of others and helps them. III. CONSIDERATIONS HELPFUL TO THIS FORBEARANCE. 1. In how many things we agree, in how few we differ. There is a threefold unity. (1) In mind (Rom. xv. 5-6). (2) In heart (Acts iv. 32). (3) In scope (Rom. xv. 5-7; Jer. xxxii. 39). 2. Take more notice of their graces than of their infirmities (Rev. ii. 2, 5, 6). 3. Remember how open the enforcements to love and unity are, and in how much the grounds of separation lie in the dark and are doubtful. 4. Think of God's love and forbearance towards us. 5. This forbearance cannot be expected from others unless shown to others (James iii. 2; Matt. vii. 12, xviii. 23). 6. How dangerous it is to reject any whom Christ will own for His. Will Christ admit him, and you cast him out (Rom. xiv. 3)? 7. As we must not give offence so we must not take it (1 Cor. xiii. 5; Matt. v. 9). 8. Our endeavour for unity ought to be earnest and constant (Eph. iv. 3; 2 Cor. xii. 15). (T. Manton, D.D.) *Perfect and imperfect*.—The perfect ones, among whom, by the idiom he employs, the apostle places himself, are those who have burst the fetters of intellectual and spiritual bondage; who have made some advancement in the Divine life, who are acquainted with the higher forms of truth, and are no strangers to the impulses and powers of Divine grace; who are the circumcision; who by the spirit worship God; who are conscious of union with Christ, of possessing righteousness through faith in Him, and some measure of conformity to Him, and who cherish through Him the hope of a happy resurrection. And, perhaps, if we take in the previous context the imperfect are those who have not been able so fully to rise above all confidence in the flesh; who still thought circumcision might not be wholly without value; who would scruple to count all such things dead and positive loss, but hankered after some of them; and who, in formally renouncing them secretly or unawares, clung to them, and might not distinctly comprehend the freeness, adaptation, and perfection of that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ. They could not be perfect runners, for they had not laid aside every weight. (Prof. Eadie.) *Perfection evidenced by consciousness of imperfection*.—The thick skin of a savage will not be disturbed by lying on sharp stones, while a crumpled rose-leaf robs the Sybarite of his sleep. So the habit of evil hardens the cuticle of conscience, and the practice of goodness restores tenderness and sensibility; and many a man laden with crime knows less of its tingling than some fair soul that looks almost spotless to all eyes but its own. As men grow better they become like that glycerine barometer recently introduced, on which a fall or a rise that would have been invisible with mercury to record it takes up inches, and is glaringly conspicuous. Good people sometimes wonder, and sometimes are made doubtful and sad about themselves by this abiding and even increased consciousness of sin. There is no need to be so. The higher the temperature the more chilling would it be to pass into an ice-house, and the more our lives are brought into fellowship with the perfect life the more shall we feel our own shortcomings. Let us be thankful if our consciences speak to us more loudly than they used to do. It is a sign of growing holiness, as the tingling in a frost-bitten limb is of returning life. Let us seek to cultivate and increase the sense of our own imperfection, and be sure that the diminution of a consciousness of sin means not diminished power of sin, but lessened horror of it, lessened perception of right, lessened love of goodness, and is an omen of death, not a symptom of life. Painter, scholar, craftsman all know that the condition of advance is the recognition of an ideal not attained. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *Means of progress*.—Let our spirits stretch out all their powers to the better things beyond, as the plants grown in darkness will send out pale shoots that feel blindly towards the light, or the seed sown on the top of a rock will grope down the bare stone for the earth by which it

must be fed. (*Ibid.*) *Practice the best means of the attainment of knowledge:—*As surely as we live, this truth of truths can only be so discerned; to those who act on what they know, more shall be revealed; and thus, if any man will do His will, he shall know the doctrine whether it be of God. Any man—not the man who has most means of knowing, who has the subtlest brains, or sits under the most orthodox preacher, or has his library fullest of most orthodox books—but the man who strives to know, who takes God at His word, and sets himself to dig up the heavenly mystery, roots and all, before sunset and the night come, when no man can work. Beside such a man, God stands in more and more visible presence as he toils, and teaches him that which no preacher can teach, no earthly authority gainsay. (*J. Ruskin.*) *The illuminating circle widening:—*The mists that shrouded the earth before the dawn do not take their flight at the very first touch of the morning sun. But before his waxing strength they disappear. So will it be, the apostle says, with moral mists. God's dealings in this respect, in the dispensation of His grace, accord with what we see every day in the physical sphere. Within certain limits, the exercise of power tends to bring more power. "To him that hath is given." To the "shatirs" who run before the king of Persia—as "Elijah girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel"—practice from childhood has given such activity of limb, that they can keep pace for many hours with a fleet horse. The swing of the heavy hammer makes the muscles of the blacksmith's arms "strong as iron bands." Similarly, "if a man be willing to do the will of God," which is the legitimate exercise of such religious knowledge as he has, "he shall know of the doctrine" further. The believer who, "whereto he has attained, walks by the same," will find his "attainment" increasing continually. For the man who fills his sphere of light with spiritual vigilance—strenuous opposition to the temptations of the world, and the flesh, and the devil—earnest effort, according to opportunity, to extend the kingdom of truth and righteousness—the illuminated circle will steadily widen. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*)

Ver. 16. Nevertheless whereto we have already attained.—*The Divine rule of faith and practice:—*I. GOD HAS LEFT HIS CHURCH A RULE OF FAITH AND MANNERS. This is a rule whereby men must walk, otherwise we should be in a labyrinth of error, having no other light but the torch of nature. II. THE PROPERTIES OF THIS RULE. 1. Unchangeableness. Therefore we must bring all to it; not it to all. 2. Perspicuous. "A lamp unto my feet," &c. 3. Homogeneous. All things therein are spiritual and holy; and therefore, when the question is about religion, we must have recourse thereto as the only absolute complete rule. III. A CHRISTIAN WALKETH BY THIS RULE. He thinks it not sufficient to take a step, but keeps a right course stedfastly onward. How may this be done? 1. Let us treasure up the word in our consciences. Let us get the rule within us; get the articles of faith and assurance of the promises, and let this be betimes while we are young. It is the ordinary cry, "The Scriptures are hard, they cannot understand them." But the reason is they are bred up in earthly businesses, and are stuffed with them so as they find no place for the Word; and it is a miracle to see men thus brought up to live by this rule. 2. When we have once treasured up the knowledge of these things, we must learn to apply them upon several occasions; for where no practice is, there knowledge is idle, and makes us worthy of more stripes. Many have general truths in their minds, but coming to apply them, they find a great want. David knew adultery was a sin, and Peter knew it was dangerous for a man to rely on himself, yet how foully did they fall. 3. Let us compare our experience with our rule. We shall find there is nothing therein but is fulfilled; there is no suffering but for sin; and that besides heaven hereafter, God rewards particular obedience here with particular rewards; and particular sin with particular corrections. We shall know that His judgments are not scarecrows. 4. Be inquisitive and watchful over our particular steps. Take and hear admonitions and instructions. Those that are otherwise minded, no marvel if they, like libertines, spurn against all instruction and advice, and accordingly feel the smart of their ways before they see it. 5. Get a wonderful jealousy over our hearts. We often offend in thoughts and desires, which God, the searcher of the heart, looks into; and we must therefore be jealous of idle thoughts and words. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Christian proficiency:—*I. IN ITS MEASURES—various—we may have outstripped others—are yet far behind. II. ITS MEANS. 1. Determined by the will of God. 2. Proved by experience. 3. Must be persevered in. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The spirit of the warning is that know-*

ledge, already enjoyed and proved in a spiritual race, should not lie dormant because it is defective. It needed not so much to be rectified as supplemented. Therefore, as far as you have its guidance take it. Walk up to the light you have and you will get more. Walk with me so far as you discern the common path, and at the point of divergence God shall rightly direct you as to the subsequent course. He who employs what he has, prepares himself for further gifts. When the morning bursts suddenly on one wakened out of sleep, it dazzles and pains him; but to him who on his journey has blessed the dawn, and walked by its glimmer, the solar radiance brings with it a gradual and cheering influence. (*Prof. Eadie.*) *The necessity of fixed rules*:—I have never noticed a single living twig which nature had not provided with a covering of bark. A creedless Church is like a barkless tree. The bark, it is true, should grow with the growth of the tree; but some bark seems a necessity of growth. I have looked down the microscope into the first beginnings of life, and seen at the very bottom of all existence a mass of protoplasmic pulp; but the cell, which is the unit of growth, is a nucleus of life protected by a wall of formed matter. This natural analogy of growth will hardly mislead us in the higher spheres of mind and morals. Some formed matter, some fixed beliefs, would seem to be necessities of the growth of religion. (*N. Smyth, D.D.*) *Walk in a straight road*:—"No man was ever lost in a straight road." This famous saying, which is attributed to the Emperor Akbar, is worthy of a place among the proverbs of Solomon. It is worthy, too, of a place in the memory of every Christian who would walk worthily of his holy profession, and would keep off forbidden ground. *Steady perseverance*:—It is not by fits and starts that men become holy. It is not occasional, but continuous, prolonged, and lifelong efforts that are required; to be daily at it; always at it; resting but to renew the work; falling but to rise again. It is not by a few, rough, spasmodic blows of the hammer, that a graceful statue is brought out of the marble block, but by the labour of continuous days, and many delicate touches of the sculptor's chisel. It is not a sudden gush of water, the roaring torrent of a summer flood, but a continuous flow, that wears the rock, and a constant dropping that hollows out the stone. It is not with a rush and a spring that we reach Christ's character, attain to perfect saintship; but step by step, foot by foot, hand over hand, we are slowly and often painfully to mount the ladder that sets on earth, and rises to heaven. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*)

Ver. 17. Brethren, be followers together of me.—*Incentives to a Christian walk*:—**COPY GREAT EXAMPLES.** II. **BEWARE OF FALSE PROFESSORS.** 1. They mind earthly things. 2. Are enemies of Christ. 3. Their end is destruction. III. **LOOK TO THE END.** 1. Your home is in heaven. 2. Christ comes to fetch you. 3. Will fashion you for it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian example*:—Together with the rules of religion we must propound God's graces in us as examples for others to imitate. I. **IMITATION IMPLIES FOUR THINGS.** 1. A doing that which another doth. 2. A doing it in the same manner. 3. A doing thereof grounded on the same affections, not as in a play where the king is often a varlet; but as a child who endeavours to imitate the father in mind as well as body. 4. A doing with an earnest desire to be like Him: so we should desire to be like Christ, and only like others as they are like Him. II. **HENCE WE MAY GATHER THE GROUND WHY WE HAVE NOT ONLY RULES IN SCRIPTURE BUT EXAMPLES.** 1. They show that the things commanded are possible. 2. They show us the way and the means more plainly. 3. They show how graceful and acceptable they are when done. So the Scripture allures to obedience. III. **USES.** 1. We ought to follow others, and especially those who are above others. Then—(1) Reverence not only the eye of God, but of weak Christians. We are to be careful not to give them a bad example. (2) Deny yourselves in liberties, especially when we are in the presence of such as will take scandal. (3) Demean yourselves so as to respect those with whom you converse. Grace will teach us to honour the meanest. 2. If we are bound to give good example then woe to the world for offences. What shall become of those who wound and vex continually the hearts of those with whom they converse. 3. As we must give good example so we must endeavour to take good from other's example; and to this end—(1) We must study them. (2) Not to uncover their shame or weakness, for this is a poisonous disposition; but as we use glasses to see ourselves by. (3) We are to observe the best and not those who are inferior to us (1 Cor. iv. 16; 2 Cor. x. 12). (4) We must learn truth before we practise, for the best have their blemishes. (5) We must labour to have hearts softened and sanctified by grace, for a stony heart will receive no impression. (6) We are to look to every one that hath any good thing worthy of:

imitation, as those who delight in gardens when they hear of any choice flowers, will have a slip for their own garden. When we see any choice flower of grace let us get a slip of it (Rom. i. 12). (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) Example is living instruction. Embodied virtue or vice cannot but be attended with the consequences of a wide-spreading influence. In the example of St. Paul here before us we see—I. AN UTTER REJECTION OF ANY RIGHTEOUSNESS OF HIS OWN AS A PLEA OF JUSTIFICATION. II. A CORDIAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE REDEEMER. III. AN UNREMITTING PURSUIT AFTER THAT HOLINESS WITHOUT WHICH NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD. Conclusion: The nobility of the Christian calling. 1. The superiority of its enjoyments. (*W. Higgin, M.A.*) A minister's example should—I. CONSIST WITH HIS TEACHING. II. BE FORMED ON THE APOSTOLIC MODEL. III. BE OBSERVED AND IMITATED AS FAR AS IT ACCORDS WITH THE TRUTH. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The duty of imitating good examples*:—The apostle persuades the Philippians to agree in the imitation of his practice in forsaking all for Christ. There were differences among them. He would have them agree in one common rule, hope, example, that they might avoid those whose walking was not a pattern (ver. 18). The lesson is also enforced in 1 Cor. iv. 16; 1 Thess. i. 6, ii. 14; 2 Thess. iii. 7; Heb. xiii. 7. I. THERE ARE SEVERAL SORTS OF EXAMPLES. 1. That of saints living in former ages and now. (1) Those in former ages (Heb. vi. 12, xii. 1; James v. 10). These should be regarded by us because—(a) They are so many and various, suited to all, and for all Christian ends. The prince in Josiah and Hezekiah; the councillor in Hushai; the rich in Abraham; the poor in the Shunamite; the courtier in the Ethiopian eunuch; the captive in Daniel; the afflicted in Job; the banished in Joseph; the soldier in Cornelius; women in Sarah (1 Pet. iii. 6); magistrates in Moses and Nehemiah; ministers in the apostles. And then of all graces: Abraham for faith, David for devotion, Job for patience, Paul for diligence. (b) These show that there is nothing impossible in our duty. Difficulties have been overcome in Divine strength and can still be. They were of the same nature, &c., with us (James v. 17). (c) Their examples are a standing testimony to confirm by experience the truth and reality of our blessed hopes (Heb. xii. 1), and thus serve to confirm our faith and excite our hope and love. (2) Those now living; for God has left us a continual succession of good examples, and these add this above all that are past. (a) That they are in our eye. (b) There is greater provocation in the examples of the living (2 Cor. ix. 2; Heb. x. 24). (c) These are yet in the way and can better help us as being within our reach (Heb. xiii. 3; 1 Pet. v. 9). 2. That of pastors and ordinary Christians (1 Pet. v. 3; 1 Cor. iv. 15–16; Heb. xiii. 7). II. WHAT IS THIS IMITATION. 1. There must be an action. To imitate is not to commemorate, or admire and commend, but to do likewise (John viii. 39). 2. A conformity to the example both for matter and manner (Luke i. 17) with the same affection of zeal and courage against sin. 3. A purpose and endeavour of imitating and not by accident. Christ must be imitated principally, and then His choice servants. III. HOW FAR WE MUST IMITATE. 1. Not in evil things; for the best have their blemishes. 2. Not in exempted cases or things done by special command (Gen. xxii. 10; Exod. xii. 35; Numb. xxv. 27; 2 Kings i. 10) or infallible gifts. IV. WHY WE MUST IMITATE THE GOOD EXAMPLES SET BEFORE US. 1. Because it is a great part of the communion of saints to profit by one another's graces (Rom. i. 12). 2. It is one end of these graces; for God hath bestowed them, not only for their benefit who have them, but also for the sake of others (chap. i. 11; 1 Thess. i. 7). 3. They show us the way to heaven more clearly and compendiously (1 Pet. iii. 1). 4. In the example of others we have encouragement as well as instruction (1 Pet. v. 9; 1 Cor. x. 13; Heb. vi. 12). V. USES. 1. To show us that good examples—(1) must be given. (a) Consider what regard we owe to weak Christians that we set them not an ill copy. (b) We shall have to give an account of those sins into which we draw others. Jeroboam's idolatry outlived him, and so a man may sin after he is dead (1 Tim. v. 22). (c) God is severe on His scandalous children (1 Sam. xii. 14; 2 Sam. xii. 10–12). (d) God's people are to show forth His praises (1 Pet. ii. 9; Isa. xliii. 10). (e) It is a greater honour to be than to take an example (1 Thess. i. 7; Eph. i. 12). (2) Must be taken. (a) It is a shame to come short of those who are upon the same level with us. (b) There are none but may learn something from others. (c) We are accountable for good examples as for other helps and means of grace. 2. To show us how cautious we should be not to be infected by bad examples. VI. HELPS TO MAKE US EXEMPLARY. 1. Love to God or zeal for His glory (Psa. cxix. 165). 2. Love to the brethren's souls (1 John ii. 10). 3. A sincere seriousness in our profession (chap. i. 10). 4. Watchfulness (2 Cor. vi. 8; 1 Cor. x. 32; Luke xvii. 8). 5. Mortification (Matt. v. 9). 6. A heart in

heaven. (*T. Mantou, D.D.*) *Example is powerful*:—Dr. Percy called upon Johnson to take him to Goldsmith's lodgings; he found Johnson arrayed with unusual care in a new suit of clothes, a new hat, and a well-powdered wig, and could not but notice his uncommon spruceness. "Why, sir," replied Johnson, "I hear that Goldsmith, who is a very great slob, justifies his disregard of cleanliness and decency by quoting my practice, and I am desirous this night to show him a better example." (*Washington Irving.*) Whilst stationed in Scotland, Colonel Durnford happened to be between Berwick and Holy Island, where a small craft had struck on the coast during a storm. Seeing the hesitation of the fishermen to go to the rescue, he jumped into a boat, calling out, "Will none of you come with me? If not, I shall go alone;" and a volunteer crew at once joined him, and succeeded in rescuing those in peril. (*Literary World.*) "Don't you ever take wine?" said a hospitable, easy-souled bishop to a friend, before whom he pushed the Madeira. "Are you afraid of it?" "No," replied his wiser friend; "I am afraid of the example."

Vers. 17-18. For many walk of whom I have told you often.—*False professors*:—**I. THEIR CHARACTER.** 1. Sensual. 2. Without shame. 3. Earthly. **II. THEIR SPIRIT.** 1. Opposed to the Spirit; 2. Doctrine; 3. Cause of the Cross. **III. THEIR END.** 1. Certain destruction. 2. Aggravated misery. **IV. THE FEELINGS WITH WHICH THEY ARE TO BE REGARDED.** 1. Sorrow. 2. Pity. 3. Fear (*Jude 23*). (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *False professors solemnly warned*:—Paul was a model pastor. 1. Watchful: his eyes were ever on the Churches. 2. Honest: he did not flinch from telling the whole truth. 3. Affectionate—"Tell you even weeping." Paul wept for three things. **I. THEIR GUILT.** 1. They were sensual persons. There were those in the early Church who would go from the Lord's table to heathen feasts, others indulged in the lusts of the flesh. And are not some professors so fond of the table and dress as to make a god of their body. 2. They did mind earthly things, and so we have ambitious, covetous Christians. They gloried in their shame, and a professing sinner generally does so more than any one else. **II. THE MISCHIEF THEY WERE DOING.** He says emphatically that they are the enemies. The infidel, the swearer, the persecutor is an enemy. Christ is wounded in gin palaces, &c., but most grievously of all in the house of His friends. Cæsar wept not till Brutus stabbed him. It is honourable to be defeated by enemies, but disgraceful to be betrayed by friends. The wicked professor is the worst enemy because—1. He grieves the Church more than any one else. 2. Nothing divides the Church so much. 3. Nothing has ever hurt poor sinners more. Many seekers would find sooner if it were not for the ill lives of professors. 4. They give the devil more theme for laughter, and the enemy more cause for joy than any other class. **III. BECAUSE HE KNEW THEIR DOOM—"Destruction."** (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The sensual and worldly exposed*:—1. The object of the apostle in the statement of his own consecration in the earlier part of the chapter was that he might the more emphatically express his desire to others that they would imitate his example (vers. 15-16), and enjoy with him the reward (vers. 20-21). He did not wish to stand on an elevation solitary and unapproached. 2. The exhortation is enforced by a distressing contrast—men who desired to be considered the followers of Christ, but over whom the obligations of religion had no power and who were proceeding fast through deep degradation to perdition. Observe—**I. THE GUILT ATTRIBUTED TO THE CHARACTERS DESCRIBED.** They were members and perhaps teachers; not open blasphemers but pretended votaries. They were—1. Sensualists. (1) "Whose God is their belly" denotes the gross and brutish indulgences to which they resorted for pleasure (*Rom. xvi. 17-18*). To pamper the appetites of the body is a tendency the power and prevalence of which cannot be sufficiently mourned (*Mark vii. 21-23; Gal. v. 19-21*), and even where there is the restraint which arises from civil institutions, care of reputation, and other motives, there is but a modification in the development of the evil, and not the removal of the evil itself. The purpose of the gospel is to overcome the propensities of original nature and turn men away from what is degrading to what is sanctifying. But there was and is an attempt to pervert the principle of the gospel, and, by the most infamous of all sophisms, to show that we are permitted to "sin that grace may abound." Awful and abominable is that heresy which would thus attempt to poison the waters of purity at their very fountain. (2) The strength of the sensuality thus deprecated is expressed with remarkable force. "Whose God is their belly"; and under the sovereign influence of that debasing passion they "glory in their shame." They make a virtue of their subjection, a

boast of their idolatry. They who regard the gratification of their appetites as the end of their existence are worshippers of their loathsome passions. They have as much denied the God of heaven as if they had acknowledged the deities of Olympus. 2. Worldlings. It may seem strange that this disposition should be placed in connection with the others as of the same kind and degree of criminality, but the phrase used expresses absorption in the concerns of the present world to the exclusion of another. And this neglect of futurity arises from the same depravity as the other. Worldliness, condemned as "idolatry," is only another development of depravity; for Christianity is designed to impress our race with the high solemnities of a world to come (Matt. vi. 19-21; Col. iii. 2; 1 John ii. 15), and when you are told of men who "mind earthly things" you are told of men who commit a sweeping act of blasphemy against the whole. II. THE CONCLUSIONS DEDUCED AS TO THESE CHARACTERS ON CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES. It is affirmed—1. They are malignant adversaries of the mediatorial character and work of the Son of God. (1) When men are enemies of the Cross, they are hostile to every purpose for which Christ came into the world. (2) In this manner a charge is advanced of special emphasis and solemnity. There is not ascribed a mere ordinary failure to comply with some of the precepts of religion, but a direct and daring enmity against that without which religion would be nothing (Rom. vi. 4-6; 2 Cor. v. 15; Tit. ii. 14; Col. iii. 11). They are enemies because—(a) They refute the grand design for which alone it was ever regarded. (b) They are the means of degrading it in the world, and exposing it to public reproach. It is not the Jew, the heathen, the savage persecutor, or the blaspheming infidel, but the man who assumes the cross as his badge. 2. Their career terminates in the woes of avenging retribution. The Cross affords the only hope of salvation. The votaries of passions and habits so hostile to the purifying principles and purposes of redeeming love are therefore necessarily placed under the awful anathema of heaven (2 Pet. ii. 10 to end). III. THE IMPULSE WHICH THE CONTEMPLATION OF SUCH CHARACTERS INSPIRES. "Tell you even weeping." Their case dwelt much on his mind, and occupied much of his ministry. To the same anxiety he refers especially in Acts xx. 18, 19, 29-31. This proceeded—1. From a dread lest the disciples of the gospel should contract their guilt. There was a loud call for vigilance lest the infection should spread. 2. From a deep concern for the peril of those by whom the guilt had been contracted already. Paul was not only anxious for the Church, but for his fellow immortals actually in a state of condemnation (Psa. cxix. 136; Jer. ix. 1; Luke xix. 41-42). It is not possible surely to contemplate the present debasement and final ruin of the sinner without sincere and heart-rending sorrow. (*J. Parsons.*) *The Cross and its enemies*.—I. THE CROSS OF CHRIST. To the nations of antiquity the cross conveyed the same idea as the gibbet does to-day. It was a badge of infamy. The Cross of Christ, however, includes all the truths involved in His death. It was not the crucifixion these people opposed, but the principles associated therewith. Regard it, then, as the symbol of debasing truths, of notions most offensive to pride. For in the Cross we see the extreme evil of sin, the necessity of a righteousness beyond man's power, the need of the substitution of a perfect sacrifice to our salvation. 1. The source of powerful motives. There is no more powerful incentive to holiness than in the Cross. Its profession commits a man to deadness to the sin for which Christ died. 2. The signal of an amazing conflict. Christ's death resulted from the depravity of the Jews, and the machinations of the devil. By that the arch enemy thought holiness would be overthrown, and thus he stirred all his agencies in earth and hell to effect it. But God so ordered it that it led on to a conflict with the principles of evil, which shall terminate in the final triumph of Christ. Opposed now, He and we with Him shall be ultimately victorious. II. THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS. They are described in ver. 2 as opposed to the Christians in ver. 3, &c. 1. They were proud men who valued their own righteousness. Gross sensual evils are not the only things offensive to God; all substitutes for the Cross as the only means of salvation are obnoxious to Him. 2. Sensual men who lived for their own pleasure. The Cross means mortification of the flesh; to pamper it, therefore, is to defeat the purpose of the Cross. 3. Worldly men who held to their possessions in opposition to the desire for heavenly things (ver. 19). The votaries of pleasure, the anxious, the miser, &c., come under this category. 4. Timid men who screened their own persons, for fear of worldly loss or persecution. III. THE AWFUL CONDITION OF ALL SUCH PERSONS. 1. They glory in their degradation; in their self-righteousness, sinful pleasures, or worldliness, or cowardice. 2. They pursue their own destruction—"The wages of sin is death." (*J. Blackburn.*)

Consistency and usefulness :—The conscience of a backsliding professor was smitten by the active and earnest efforts of a more faithful brother, whom he at length offered to assist in devotional services. To this objection was made by one who said, "I cannot hear him pray for me. His life does not pray. Let him repent of his unfaithfulness and confess to God and men, and then we will hear him." If we would nave our prayers credited as sincere, our lives must be in accordance with them. (Paxton Hood.) *Enemies of the Cross of Christ: their suicidal policy* :—What would you think if there were to be an insurrection in a hospital, and sick man should conspire with sick man, and on a certain day should rise up and reject the doctors and nurses? There they would be—sickness and disease within, and all the help without! Yet what is a hospital compared with this fever-ridden world, which goes swinging in pain and anguish through the centuries, when men say, "We have got rid of the atonement, and we have got rid of the Bible"? Yes, and you have rid yourselves of salvation. (H. W. Beecher.) *Professed friends secret foes* :—When a small band of Protestants were striving for their liberties in Switzerland, they bravely defended a pass against an immense host. Though their dearest friends were slain, and they themselves were weary and ready to drop with fatigue, they stood firm in the defence of the cause they had espoused. On a sudden, however, a cry was heard—a dread and terrible shriek. The enemy was winding up a steep acclivity, and when the commander turned his eye thither, O how his brow gathered with storm! He ground his teeth, and stamped his foot, for he knew that some caittiff Protestant had led the blood-thirsty foe up the goat track to slay his friends. Then turning to his friends, he said, "On;" and like a lion on his prey, they rushed upon their enemies, ready now to die, for a friend had betrayed them. So feels the bold-hearted Christian when he sees his fellow-member betraying Christ, when he beholds the citadel of Christianity given up to its foes by those who pretend to be its friends. Beloved, I would rather have a thousand devils out of the Church than have one in it. I do not care about all the adversaries outside; our greatest cause of fear is from the crafty wolves in sheep's clothing that devour the flock. It is against such that we would denounce in holy wrath the solemn sentence of Divine indignation, and for such we would shed our bitterest tears of sorrow. They are "the enemies of the Cross of Christ." (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Ver 18. And now tell you even weeping that they are enemies to the Cross of Christ.—I. THE CAUSES OF PAUL'S GRIEF. 1. Negatively. It was not hatred and ill-will to their persons, nor emulation of their credit, nor desire of venting reproaches. Some men's zeal against error is as much to be feared as others lapsing into it. Ithacus had nothing good in him but his hatred of the Priscillianists, and this so far transported him that every zealous man was a Priscillianist. 2. Positively—(1) Pure zeal for God's glory (Psa. lxix. 9; Rom. xv. 3). (2) The Church's welfare (Psa. cxii. 9; Isa. lxii. 1; Psa. cxxxvii. 6). Pity to souls, both of the ringleaders and their proselytes. (3) Clear apprehensions of the mischievous effects of sin. II. THE BRAND HE PUTS ON THEM OVER WHOM HE WEEPS. "Enemies of the Cross of Christ." 1. To clear this observe—(1) That those who profess friendship to Christ may yet be enemies to Him. (2) That friendship and enmity to Christ is not interpreted so much by external profession as by the constitution of our hearts and the course of our conversation (Luke vi. 46; Matt. vii. 21; 1 Pet. i. 17). (3) That the worldly spirit is that constitution of heart which is blank opposite to the Cross. 2. To prove this—(1) The Scripture expressly asserts it (James. iv. 4; Matt. vi. 24; 1 John ii. 15). (2) Experience confirms it. (a) It was the worldly spirit that caused the Jews to persecute Christ and His servants (James ii. 5-6; Luke xvi. 14). (b) This makes the nominal Christian to be such an opposer of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and to content himself with the name of Christianity. (c) This distinguishes the hypocrites from the sincere. (d) This hinders the sincere from doing all they would for God. (3) Reason evidences it. (a) From the intent of the Cross, which was to be an expiation for sin. To cross this end is to refuse God's remedy. The Cross also purchased for us that Spirit of power and all those helps of grace by which we overcome the world (Gal. i. 4). Now those who mind earthly things defeat the end of the Spirit. The Cross, too, purchased heaven, and those who aim at earthly happiness contradict this. The Cross, too, is a pattern and example of suffering, patience, and a glorious issue, each of which worldliness contemns. (b) From the nature of the religion founded on the Cross—faith, hope, and love—which a worldly spirit destroys. III. USES. 1. To show how mistaken they are who reconcile the love of the world with a profession of

godliness (Luke xviii. 23; 1 Pet. v. 2; Rom. xvi. 8). 2. To press those who would be sincere Christians to mortify their affections to earthly things. (1) Christ counts none friends of His who love not His Cross. (2) The true virtue of Christ's Cross is only found by those who are crucified by it to the world. (3) Till this be done your love to God and hope of heaven are questionable. (*T. Mantou, D.D.*) *The Cross of Christ and its enemies*:—I. WHAT IS THE CROSS? Not simply the instrument of torture, but the sufferings Christ endured and the blessings which result from them. In this enlarged acceptance consider the Cross as—1. The foundation of our hope as fallen sinners. To the sinner viewing futurity apart from the atonement the prospect is appalling. 2. The source of our spiritual enjoyment, peace, joy, access to and fellowship with God. 3. The main theme of the gospel ministry. It furnishes the preacher with a rich and endless variety of topics, of which it is the harmonizing and illustrative principle. 4. The most legitimate object in which we may triumph, and of which we may make our boast. Some boast of their ancestors, wealth, honours, learning, &c. 5. The pledge of everlasting glory. II. WHO ARE ITS ENEMIES? 1. Those who deprive it of its saving virtue. 2. Those who decline its purchased privileges. 3. Those who preach another gospel of which it is not the centre. 4. Those who make their boast of any other object. 5. Those who reject it as the condition of their heavenly crown. (*R. Cameron.*) *Enemies of the Cross*:—I. ST. PAUL WAS IN THE HABIT OF REPEATING THE SAME THINGS TO HIS CONVERTS. We learn from this not only that he thought the Philippians should be on their guard against the enemies of the Cross, but that he feared the lesson would be forgotten unless repeated time after time. There is an incessant craving for novelty, so that the preacher is likely to find himself blamed if he dwells chiefly on truths a hundred times told, and yet these simple truths are those which most need being pressed on men. II. ST. PAUL'S DISTRESS AT WHAT HE HAD TO SAY. Why did the apostle weep? What is there in the sins of others to cause a righteous man to weep? Nay, he would not be a righteous man if they did not move him to tears. We do not expect it of the wicked. They are not moved by their own sins, it were strange indeed if they were moved by those of their fellows. But if we Christians only think of the wretchedness of the wicked in this life and that to come, there is cause enough to fill the breast of every one of us with grief too mighty for utterance. You who cannot see a fellow creature in pain without feeling pain may witness a scene of such misery as was never found on earth, and be indifferent to it if you can. III. THOSE WHO CALLED FORTH THIS TEARFUL AND FREQUENT MENTION. Not enemies of Christ but of His Cross, and therefore those who opposed or disliked the truths associated with the death of our Redeemer. Putting aside the speculative enmity of the Socinian and the profligate who is only the enemy of the Cross as he is the enemy of all religion, we notice—1. Those who in any measure or degree would set aside the work of mediation and look to their own righteousness for salvation. 2. The inconsistent professor, whose practice is at open variance with the gospel. The Cross is so constructed that it inculcates holiness while it offers pardon. 3. The covetous, who oppose its example of self-sacrifice. (*H. Melvill, D.D.*) *Enemies of the cross*:—The text is a parenthesis enclosing, like some good garden, flowers of apostolic virtue and weeds of Philippian wickedness. I. THE FIDELITY OF THE APOSTLE IS COMMENDED BY—1. His warning, "I have told you." As wisdom hath eyes to note evils, so faithfulness hath a tongue to notify them. We are seers of God in respect of our eyes, and prophets in respect of our tongues. We are blind guides if we see not, and dumb dogs if we give not warning of what we see. We should not be like dials or watches to teach the eye, but like clocks and "larums to ring in the ear. God will never thank us for keeping His counsel, but for divulging it. The prophet prays, "Set a door before my lips," not a wall, but a door that may be seasonably let loose and free when convenience or necessity require it. If I see a blind man walking towards some deep pit and do not warn him, I am not less guilty of his death than if I had thrust him down (*Ezek. xxxiii. 7*). A sleeping sentinel is the loss of a whole city. 2. The frequency of the warning—not once or seldom, but often. St. Paul feared not tautology, rather like a skilful workman he beats still on the same anvil. There can never be too much warning where there can never be enough heed. Nice ears are all for variety of doctrines; as palates of meats. St. Paul hates to feed this wanton humour, and tells them this single diet is safe for them. We tell over the same coins, and spend night after day in the same game without weariness. There is an itch of the ear which St. Paul foresaw would prove epidemical in later times. Too many

pulpits are full of curious affectations, new crochets, strange mixtures of opinions, insomuch that old and plain forms are grown stale and despicable. There cannot be a more certain argument of a decayed and sickly stomach than the loathing of wholesome and solid food, and longing after new and artificial composition. O foolish Israelites, with whom too much frequency made the food of angels contemptible. "The full despiseth the honeycomb," and there are many thus full of the world and sinful corruptions. But for us let not these dainties of heaven lose their worth for their store. Often inculcation of warnings necessarily implies danger, and there is much danger of the infection of evil. 3. The passion—"Weeping." What is it that could wring tears from those eyes? Even the same that fetched them from our Saviour, and from all eyes that pretend to holiness—compassion of sinners. What shall I say to such as make merry with sin? O that we should laugh at that for which our Saviour wept and bled. Tears do well in the pulpit. As it is in the buckets of some pumps, that water must be first poured down into them ere they can fetch up water in abundance; so must our tears be let down to fetch up more from our hearers. Worldly men as they have hard hearts have dry eyes, but the tender hearts of God's children are ever lightly attended with weeping eyes. And if good men spend tears on sinners how much more ought sinners to weep for themselves. See who it was for whom Paul wept: dogs and the concision. So, then, Christ's charitable children should not desire or rejoice in the destruction of those who profess hostility against them. Every man can mourn for the fall of a friend, but to be thus deeply affected with the sins or judgments of wicked persons is incident to none but a tender and charitable heart. God's children are like their Father (1 Tim. ii. 4; Ezek. xviii. 23, xxxiii. 11).

II. THE WICKEDNESS OF THE FALSE TEACHERS. 1. Their number—"many." Note, then, that the rarity of conscionable men should make them more observed and valued, as grains of gold amidst the rubbish of the ore and dust. Paucity is wont to carry contempt with it; but with Christians one is worth more than a thousand. It is better to follow one Noah into the ark than to perish with a world of unbelievers. "Many" are opposed to "us." It is not for us to stand upon the fear of an imputation of singularity: we may not do as the most, but as the best. The world is apt to make an ill use of multitude: on the one side arguing the better part by the greater, on the other arguing mischief tolerable because abetted by many. If the first should hold good paganism would carry it from Christianity, and hell from heaven. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." What abatement of torment will it be to be condemned with many. If the second, that which heightens evils should plead for their immunity, so none but weak mischiefs should receive opposition. Strong thieves should escape while petty pilferers should be punished. Away with this base pusillanimity. If the devils can say "my name is legion," let your powerful commands cast them out.

2. Their motion—"walk." (1) Natural. Walking is living. Every minute is a new pace. None can stop our passage. Whether we do something or nothing we move on by insensible steps toward our long home. (2) Voluntary. So the wicked ones walk like their setter (Job i. 7). Wickedness is seldom other than active. (3) Walking implies an ordinary mode of life. It is not a step, or a pace, that can make a walk, but a proceeding on with many shiftings of our feet. It is no judging of a man by one action. The best man may step aside as David and Peter—but their walk was in the ways of God's commandments. What is the course of men's lives? If drunkenness, debauchery, &c., their walk is an ill way to an evil end; pity those and labour to reclaim them. But if their general course be holy it is not a particular miscarriage that can be a just ground of censure.

3. Their quality—"Enemies of the Cross of Christ." But who can but hate that which was the cause of the death of our best Friend. Surely we love not Christ if we hate not what was accessory to His murder. But if we regard it as improved by Christ for man we must love it. The cross was the death that gives us life; so that we cannot be at once enemies of the Cross and friends of the crucified. (1) As Christ, so His Cross has many false friends who are no other than enemies. Unjust favours are as injurious as derogations. To deify a saint is as bad as devilizing him. Romanists exceed in this way their devotions to the Cross; whose friendship to the altar is a defiance to the sacrifice. (2) The Philippian Pseudapostles were enemies. (a) In doctrine, who joined circumcision and other legalities with the Cross, so by a pretended partnership detracting from the virtue of Christ's death. And so now how palpable enemies are they who hold Christ's satisfaction imperfect without ours. (b) In practice, viz., those who shift off persecution by conformity to the

present world—caring more for a whole skin than a sound soul—and loose livers. Christ's Cross is our redemption from sin; and those who wilfully sin frustrate the Cross and mock at redemption (Gal. ii. 20). 4. Their end. A woeful condition beyond all thoughts. Here is every circumstance that may add horror to a condition. (1) Suddenness (Psa. xxxvii. 2; Isa. v. 24; Prov. x. 25; Psa. lxxiii. 19). (2) Extremity. The wrath of God is as Himself infinite. (3) Impossibility of release. If the torment might have an end there were some comfort. O mad sinners, that for a little momentary contentment cast themselves into everlasting perdition! (*Bishop Hall.*) *Enemies of the cross* : I. There is reason to believe that MANY PROFESSORS OF RELIGION ARE ENEMIES TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST (Matt. xiii. 24-30, 47-50, vii. 21, 23). But observe in passing—1. That Christianity is not responsible for hypocrites and self-deceived professors. Religion does not produce nor countenance hypocrisy. 2. Christianity does not stand alone. There are many false friends, patriots, professors of honesty, temperance, &c. 3. We claim for Christianity only the good it has done, and point to the sinners it has reformed. 4. We ask that on this subject the language of discrimination and justice should be used.

II. HOW MAY WE DETERMINE WHEN PROFESSORS ARE ENEMIES TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST? 1. When they have not been born again. "The carnal mind is enmity with God." 2. When they live in the indulgence of any known sin. It needs no argument to show that the man who is seeking my hurt in any way is my enemy. The man who indulges in known sin shows that he disregards God's authority, and despises the work of Christ which is to cleanse us from all iniquity. 3. When they pursue a doubtful or undecided course of conduct without any effort to know what is right. 4. When they manifest in their conduct none of the peculiarities of those who truly love Him. These are not morality, good temper, &c., for worldly men have these. Christ did not die that His followers might be like other men, but that they should be a peculiar people. 5. When they have a deeper interest in their worldly affairs than in the cause of their Redeemer (ver. 19, chap. ii. 21; 2 Tim. iii. 2). The proof of this proposition lies in a nutshell. (1) Christ said, "He that is not for Me is against Me." (2) There is no better way of knowing a man's character than observation of his walk and conversation. (3) The interests of Christ's kingdom are intended to be supreme. He seeks no divided sway (Luke xiv. 26). (4) The principles of Christianity cannot lie dormant in the soul. If they exist they will be manifested. 6. When nothing can induce them to give up their worldly concerns for the cause of religion upon God's demands. We make a great mistake when we speak of our time, talents, property. The affairs of this life, as well as prayer and praise, should be pursued as part of the service we owe to God. The gospel was designed to overcome the love of the world, and to induce men to surrender all when God urges His claims (Luke ix. 23, xiv. 26). (1) If a professed follower of Christ will not abandon those amusements which are obviously and certainly inconsistent with the gospel, he is the enemy of the Cross of Christ. (2) So is he who will not surrender his property to God when He demands it for His service. (3) And he who employs all his time in doing his own will. 7. When they are opposed to all that is peculiar in the doctrines of Christianity. (1) When the doctrines of the Bible in general are admitted, but in detail are denied. (2) When those truths which are found in natural religion are acknowledged, but the truths peculiar to the gospel are doubted. (3) When a man will not examine those doctrines to satisfy his own mind whether they are true or false. (4) When a man becomes angry when those doctrines are preached. (5) When in the circle of the worldly he is unwilling that it should be known that he holds them. 8. When they are opposed to the peculiar duties of Christianity. (1) When the obligations of piety are admitted in general but denied in particular. (2) When there is no sympathy with the plans of true Christians in the spread of the gospel. (3) When all the sympathies are on the side of the enemy of Christ. III. WHY IS THE FACT OF THEIR BEING IN THE CHURCH FITTED TO EXCITE GRIEF. Because—1. They are cherishing hopes that will be disappointed, and are exposed to danger that is unfelt (2 Cor. ii. 4). 2. Their influence. (1) The loss of so much positive strength to the cause of the Redeemer. (2) It tends to discourage the true friends of God. (3) It is a real hindrance to the cause of God, for "he that is not with Me is against Me." (4) It gives occasion for the reproach and opposition of a wicked world. (5) It is the occasion of the loss of the souls of men. An ungodly parent adds to his own destruction that of his children. 3. The slender probability that they will ever be saved. The apostle did not anticipate the conversion of those whose end was destruction (Matt. xiii. 30). There is more hope for the open sinner and the

heathen than for the self-deluded professor. (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *Inconsistency is—* I. COMMON. Many betray their profession by their—1. Spirit. 2. Temper. 3. Conduct. II. ENMITY TO THE CROSS. It—1. Contradicts its teaching. 2. Puts discredit on its glory. 3. Hinders its success. III. MATTER OF REGRET. The inconsistent—1. Dishonour Christ. 2. Injure others. 3. Ruin themselves. (*J. Iyth, D.D.*) *The significance of manly tears:—*It is an unusual and a distressing thing to see a man weep. Women may not be ashamed of their tears, nor seek to hide them; and when we see them weep, we do not turn away, but hasten to their side, saying, "Woman, why weepest thou?" But men are ashamed to weep. They brush the falling tear from their eye to hide it, or when they cannot restrain their grief, like Peter, they go from the presence of men to weep bitterly in private. There is something so sacred and so solemn, or else so ludicrous, in the tears of men, that friends feel it kindly not to notice when they fall, or, like the friends of Job, to pause awhile in silence ere they ask, Man, why weepest thou? As a rule, man cannot bear to speak of, nor to be spoken to about, their tears. How strange, then, is the contrast in our text, where Paul is not only seen weeping privately in his prison at Rome, but writing to the distant Church at Philippi to tell them of his tears! Similar examples we find among the prophets. There were times when they did not try to repress nor to hide their tears, but desired, and proclaimed aloud that they desired, to weep, saying, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night!" Now, why was it thus? Why was it that strong men desired to weep, and not to hide their tears? The answer is plain and striking. They thus wept, and proclaimed their weeping, not when they wept for themselves, but over others. When they wept for themselves, like Peter, they went out to a secret place to weep alone before their God. But when they saw how evil men ran on in sin, they did not hide, but showed the rivers of tears that ran down their cheeks. There was no shame nor weakness in tears like these. (*W. Grant.*) *Tears for sinners:—*It is not so much anger as grief which should be excited in us by the prevalence of iniquity. Nature may make our eyes flash fire, but grace will make them shed tears, as God's law is broken and His authority defied. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Saint-like tears:—*Let no man say that tears argue weakness; even the firmest marble weeps in a resolution of the air. Nay, such tears as these argue strength of piety and heavenly affections. To weep for fear is childish; that is unbecoming a man; to weep for anger is womanish and weak; to weep for mere grief is human; for sin, Christian; but for true zeal and compassion, is saint-like and Divine: every one of these drops is a pearl. Behold the precious liquor which is reserved, as the dearest relique of heaven, in the bottles of the Almighty; every dram whereof is valued at an eternal weight of glory. Even a cup of cold water shall be rewarded; and, behold, every drop of this warm water is more worth than many cups of cold. Weep thus awhile, and laugh for ever; sow thus in tears, and be sure to reap in joy. (*Bishop Hall.*)

Ver. 19. Whose end is destruction.—I. THEIR SIN. Earthly mindedness. It seems hard to say that we should not at all mind earthly things. These are necessary to sweeten our pilgrimage, and support us during our service. We have our "earthly house" that must be maintained (2 Cor. v. 1). Therefore God does allow us in some sort to mind earthly things, but—1. Not only. Some mind them who have no tincture of religion (Psa. x. 4; Rom. viii. 5; Luke x. 42, xii. 21). 2. Not chiefly. The gross worldling is discovered by his only minding, the secret worldling by his chiefly minding. The rule is that spiritual things must be sought in the first place (Matt. vi. 33), and we must trust God for other things in the way of honest endeavours. The minding of earthly things is when religion is subordinate to the world, when the lean kine devour the fat (Luke viii. 14). This matter will be known by three things. (1) What is your chief end and scope? It must be God and heaven (2 Cor. iv. 18; Phil. iii. 14). The end cuts out the work and forms the thoughts. (2) What is your chief business? If it be about earthly things you are earthly minded. Surely our great business is to obtain salvation by Christ (chap. ii. 12). It is dangerous to miscarry in so weighty a work. (3) What is the great joy and trouble of your hearts? Is it to have and want the world? (Luke xii. 19). The saints fetch their solace from spiritual things (Psa. iv. 6-7, cxix. 14, xciv. 19, xxx. 7); but if disappointment in the world be the cause of our trouble, and happiness in the world feedeth our joy, surely we mind these things most. 3. Alas! a child of God is often too worldly. In particular acts he may carry himself too much like

an earthly minded man, but no prevalent covetousness, voluptuousness, or ambition possesses his heart instead of God. He is growing out of these distempers and settling his soul to his constant bent, work, and joy. II. THE AGGRAVATIONS OF THIS SIN. 1. "Whose God is their belly." (1) They prize the belly. Provision for the flesh is the sum of worldly happiness. But the world yields no more than bodily food and clothing, which the poorest may attain without so much ado. Are they nearer to true comfort and further from the grave? (Psa. xvii. 14). You say that some rich men will not afford themselves conveniences, but fare hard. Answer—(a) Covetousness is usually the purveyor of the flesh (Rom. viii. 5). Those who seem to deal hardly with it, please it—by hoarding if not by spending. (b) They are twice fools, for they transgress the laws both of nature and of grace (Eccles. v. 18-19). (c) They lay it up for them who spend it on the belly; and as one goes to hell for getting, so does the other for spending, till it revolve into hands that will use it better (Eccles. ii. 26; Prov. xiii. 22; Job xxvii. 17). Estates are ruined by sins of omission as well as commission. (2) This belly is made a god. Our god is that which we value most, and for whose sake we do things (Col. iii. 5; Eph. v. 5). (3) How justly are they deprived of eternal salvation. (a) They put a vile scorn on God and Christ (2 Tim. iii. 4; 1 John ii. 15). (b) They that serve a base god cannot but have a base spirit. Every man's temper is as his god is (Psa. cxv. 8). (c) They are not only unfit for God, but opposite to Him (James iv. 4). 2. Their glory is in their shame. (1) That which a man prizes most he will glory in, be it wealth, honour, parts, or the Lord (Jer. ix. 23-24). Man will glory in something. True Christians renounce all carnal gloryings (2 Cor. i. 12; Gal. vi. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 10). (2) The true object of glorying is God and Christ (Jer. ix. 23-24; Jer. iv. 2; 1 Cor. i. 30-31). (3) Not only benefits but sufferings for Christ should be more to us than all the world (Heb. xi. 26; Acts v. 41; 2 Cor. xii. 9-10). (4) A mortified estate is a greater cause for glory than an exalted, because it is a far greater mercy (Gal. vi. 14; James i. 9-10). (5) The carnal rejoice in earthly things as pleasing to the flesh; and so do the godly, as far as the flesh remaineth in them; but this is our weakness and disgrace. (6) This is to bid defiance to religion and to glory in your shame when you bless yourselves more for having an estate in the world than an interest in the promises. This is as if it were a sign of prudence to glory in the finding of a pin. III. THEIR PUNISHMENT—"Their end," &c. 1. It is good to look to the end of things (Deut. xxxii. 29; Lam. i. 9; Jer. xvii. 11; Heb. xiii. 7). 2. Worldly pleasures will end in everlasting destruction (1 Tim. vi. 9-10; Rom. vi. 21, 23; Gal. vi. 8; Rom. viii. 6, 13; 2 Cor. xi. 15). 3. The punishment is the more dreadful to give us the more help, and the more powerful argument against those pleasing lusts. It is sweet to please the flesh, but it will cost us dear. IV. USES. 1. Do we mind earthly things or heavenly? (1) Do not fix them as your scope (1 Tim. vi. 9). (2) Let not this be your great work (Matt. vi. 24). (3) Let not earthly things be your great delight (1 Cor. vii. 29-30; Phil. iv. 12; Psa. lxii. 10). 4. When your estate is yet to be made or gotten, let your desires be modest (Isa. v. 8; Eccles. v. 10; Heb. xiii. 5). (4) Moderate your cares about these things (Matt. vi. 25-32; Phil. iv. 5-6; 1 Pet. v. 7). (5) Be willing to resign them to Christ when the enjoyment of them is inconsistent with your fidelity to Him (Luke xiv. 33). 5. To dissuade us from earthly mindedness consider—(1) You must shortly die and come to your account, and according to the account you give and the preparation you have made you must live in endless joy or misery. (2) The danger of abundance (Matt. xix. 24; Eccles. v. 11-12; Luke xii. 48). (3) See by faith those sure, great, and glorious things which are infinitely more worthy your love and labour (Col. iii. 2; Heb. xi. 25). (4) Think often of your great necessities (Luke x. 42). (T. Manton, D.D.) *Earthliness*:—I. ITS MANIFESTATIONS. 1. Sensuality. 2. Pride. 3. Covetousness. II. ITS SHAME. It degrades—1. The understanding. 2. The moral nature. 3. The immortal spirit. III. ITS END. 1. Ruin. 2. Misery. (J. Lyth, D.D.) *Materialism*:—There is—1. A philosophic materialism which reduces the soul to a series of phenomena to be accounted for by superiority of physical organization in man, and makes God an expression for the sum of nature's workings. 2. A practical materialism which does not trouble itself to deny the existence of the soul or the claims of God, but is nevertheless buried in matter, and swallowed up of earthliness. There were baptized Christians in Philippi who were enemies of the Cross, because while wearing the Christian name they were given up to sensuality. This, in various forms, is a crying evil in all prosperous times. The text is applicable to the worldling now. I. WHO ARE THEY WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS? 1. Those whose sole care

is the increase of wealth. Business occupies their whole attentions. Material interests absorb their whole soul. Such was the man described by our Lord (Luke vii. 18, &c.). These divorce what God has joined together—diligence in business and fervency of spirit. 2. Those whose sole enjoyment is the pleasures of this life (Luke xvi. 19). "Whose god is their belly" describes one type of sensual enjoyment. But a man wholly given up to even innocent enjoyment is, in truth, a mere sensualist. He neglects and despises the pleasures of—(1) devotion; (2) godly companionship; (3) heavenly anticipation (ver. 20). II. WHAT IS THE END OF THOSE WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS? "Destruction." "They that sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Luke xvi. 24-25). (*Family Churchman.*) *Illustrations of the apostle's sentiment*:—Even heathen thought in its higher types could brand sensualists as *κοιλιοδαίμονες*, men who worshipped belly-gods. The striking words which Euripides puts into the mouth of the Cyclops, the type of this class, have often been cited in this connection: "I sacrifice to no one but myself; not to the gods, but to this my belly, the greatest of the gods; for to eat and drink each day is the god for wise men." We have, further, the greatest of the German poets representing Mephistopheles as contemptuously, yet insinuatingly saying to the fool rejoicing in his possessions, "Du hast dafür was Schlund und Bauch begehrt." And we have the words of scathing denunciation of John Ruskin, "The creation over which God appointed us kings, and in which we have chosen to live as swine." With such instances of the contempt with which men can justly regard the lower, baser levels of life, we can the better comprehend the indignant yet sorrowing scorn with which the apostle contemplates the objects of his denunciation. In view, too, of such grossness of nature as is here depicted, we can listen to the call which Chrysostom has addressed to every true cross-bearer—the call to higher things—"Thou hast received a belly that thou mayest feed, not distend it; that thou mayest have the mastery over it, not have it as mistress over thee; that it may minister to thee for the nourishment of the other parts, not that thou mayest minister to it; not that thou mayest exceed limits. The sea, when it passes its bounds, doth not work so many evils as the belly doth to our body, together with our soul." They are men who, in the contemptuous words of the Roman satirist, in their all-engrossing care for their belly and their amusements, ask no other favours of their emperor than "bread and circus-games." They are those who, as Cornelius a Lapide puts it, are like the moles, ever concerned with the earth, ever blindly digging in the earth, and ever breathing of the earth, whereas Christians feed on heavenly food and breathe the air of heaven. Or once more, we can recognize these men in the picture in the interpreter's chamber of Bunyan's allegory, "The man that could look no way but downwards, with the muck-rake in his hand, while there stood over his head one with a celestial crown in his hand, and proffered him that crown for his muck-rake; but the man did neither look up nor regard, but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks, and dust of the floor." (*J. Hutchison, D.D.*) *The curse of carnality*:—Carnal men are daily partakers of the serpent's curse: they go on their belly, and eat dust. (*Archbishop Leighton.*) *Whose god is their belly*:—The Sicilians erected an altar and a statue in the temple of Ceres to Adephegia, the goddess of gluttony, thus literally illustrating these words. Similar examples of the personification and worship of lusts abound in modern heathenism. (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *Glory and shame*:—Of Anacreon, the famous lyric poet (520 B.C.), whose genius was devoted to the praise of sensual pleasures, the people of Athens raised a statue in the citadel, in which he was represented as an old drunken man singing. He had lived to eighty-five, and was choked at last by a grape stone. (*Ibid.*) *Belly worship reprov'd*:—A gentleman in England, who had a chapel attached to his house, was visited by a person from London, to whom he showed the chapel. "What a glorious kitchen this would make!" said the visitor. "When I make a god of my belly," replied the gentleman, "I will make a kitchen of my chapel." (*Biblical Museum.*) *The love of this world is a great hindrance to the gospel*:—Dr. Justus Jonas told Dr. Martin Luther of a noble and powerful Misnian who above all things occupied himself in amassing gold and silver, and was so buried in darkness that he gave no heed to the five books of Moses, and had even said to Duke John Frederick, who was discoursing with him upon the gospel, "Sir, the gospel pays no interest." "Have you no grains?" interposed Luther; and then told this fable:—"A lion, making a great feast, invited all the beasts, and with them some swine. When all manner of dainties were set before the guests, the swine asked, 'Have you no grains?'" "Even so," continued the Doctor, "even so, in these days, is it with our epicureans; we

preachers set before them, in our churches, the most dainty and costly dishes, as everlasting salvation, the remission of sins, and God's grace; but they, like swine, turn up their snouts, and ask for guilders: offer a cow nutmeg, and she will reject it for old hay. This reminds me of the answer of certain parishioners to their minister, Ambrose R. He had been earnestly exhorting them to come and listen to the Word of God. 'Well,' said they, 'if you will tap a good barrel of beer for us we'll come with all our hearts and hear you.' The gospel at Wittenberg is like unto the rain which, falling upon a river, produces little effect; but descending upon a dry, thirsty soil, renders it fertile." (*Luther's Table Talk.*)

Vers. 20-21. For our conversation is in heaven.—Observe—I. HEAVEN IS DESCRIBED AS A POLITY. II. EVERY BELIEVER HAS AN INTEREST IN IT. III. THIS INTEREST INFLUENCES HIS CONDUCT. 1. He confesses himself a stranger on earth. 2. Denies himself. 3. Sets his affections on things above. IV. THE GREAT OBSTACLE TO HIS COMPLETE HAPPINESS IS HIS HUMILIATED BODY. V. HE ANTICIPATES ITS GLORIFICATION. VI. CHRIST WILL EFFECT IT AT HIS COMING. VII. THEREFORE WE LOOK FOR HIM. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Christian's country*:—1. "Conversation" has much the same meaning as the political word "constitution." "Citizenship" is a good rendering if to the ordinary meaning of political standing and privilege be added the mode of a nation's government, the character of its laws, the tone and habits of its citizens. 2. The word rendered "is" denotes that our constitution endures and rules. 3. States have their heads; ours is "the Lord Jesus Christ." 4. There are here two practical motives by which St. Paul urges the Philippians to walk so that they have true Christian teachers for an ensample. I. THE ENERGY OF LOYALTY. 1. Loyalty is reverence for, not mere submission to law. A man may be obedient for fear of punishment. A loyal man will not think much of a penalty to be escaped. The privilege of his citizenship was the protection of every Roman. By pleading this Paul escaped the lash. But that would be a poor loyalty which only pleaded privilege without the homage of submission. The loyal Roman would behave himself as a freeman. Regard for others would be instilled into him by reverence for the law which protected all. They are not loyal Englishmen who by their vices have brought shame on the English name in foreign lands. Attachment to one's country will lead a man to live worthy of it. 2. You see how loyalty to heaven affected Paul. It was a pain to him that there were Christians unmindful of their heavenly character, dishonouring themselves and casting contempt on their citizenship. The honour of the heavenly citizen is the strong motive by which he appeals to his disciples. Loyalty to a higher order is an energy to resist temptation. True patriotic pride is an impulse to sons to prove worthy of their sires; a name is theirs which they must not dishonour. The higher law of the household constrains many to purity of thought and manly struggle. The thought of home, wife, children, parents, deprives temptation of all its force. Loyalty to the sanctities of household piety is the energy of a pure and reverent life. In this way Paul appeals to the Philippians when he says "we are citizens of heaven." He is putting them on their honour, while around them are many who have fallen from their profession. 3. Reflect on the obligations of your heavenly home. How pure, lowly, gentle, &c., you expect to be when there. But to all this we are actually called now. Many a man reflecting on his end hopes for a previous time of amendment. In this he shows his recognition of the heavenly character. And we are now citizens of heaven, and its life must be our life on earth. II. THE INSPIRATION OF HOPE. 1. Note the sudden change in Paul's writing. Having introduced the fact of the heavenly citizenship, as an admonition he turns to dwell on the hope it inspires. The Philippians had seen Paul's degradation change into triumph on the mention of the words, "I am a Roman citizen." Then the imperial law of Rome had been his protection; now he was enduring wrong at the hands of the emperor himself. The contrast between human statecraft and heavenly rule comes up sharp before him, and in a burst of triumph he utters his expectation of his King's appearance. 2. Paul knew what was the bondage of the body. How often had the zeal of his spirit worn out the feeble flesh. It is deeply pathetic to think of this man of inspired will, dauntless courage, and deathless energy, suffering humiliation because of the tried and suffering frame. But the body was not "vile." He is finding no fault with it. It is answering the purpose of humiliation for which it was designed. His master was keeping him down in feeble flesh that any spiritual pride in him might be checked. Think of it, you of hasty spirit; this man, noblest of all who have borne Christ's image, submitted meekly to this restriction.

3. But it was in hope of a blessed transformation. Wisely ordered is the body of humiliation, lest the terrible sin of spiritual arrogance should be ours. But wise and kind as is the discipline, we long for it to be over. Our body is, indeed, a "body of humiliation"; we must have it changed ere we can be free. But we shall be free. Guard we the Spirit, and He by the energy with which He is able to subdue all things to Himself will "change the body," &c. (*A. Mackennal, D.D.*) *The citizenship and the hope* :—I. THE CITIZENSHIP. The meaning of the apostle is expressed more fully in Eph. ii. 19; Heb. xii. 22; Gal. iv. 26. Believers are already numbered among the citizens of the eternal city. 1. They are introduced among the denizens of glory by regeneration. 2. They live according to the laws of their Divine sovereign. 3. They enjoy the immunities of the celestial citizenship—freedom from the guilt and power of sin, peace which passeth all understanding, complete safety. 4. They are engaged in the employments of the city of God; for they delight to do His will. 5. These considerations should have a practical influence on our heart and conduct. If citizens of heaven, we ought not to degrade ourselves by the slavery of earth.

II. THE HOPE. 1. The coming of Christ. The original expresses earnest expectation and intense desire. Paul was intent upon and delighted with the animating prospect. (1) The foundation of the hope was the sure Word of God. For Jesus had repeatedly declared that He would come again (Matt. xxiv. 30; Mark xiii. 26), and the angels at the ascension (Acts i. 11). (2) At His second advent Jesus will accomplish all the predictions which relate to His kingdom and glory (Dan. vii. 13-14). 2. The resurrection of the saints. (1) The bodies of the faithful will be transformed into the likeness of the glorious body of Christ (Rom. vi. 1; 1 Cor. xv.). Christ's glorious body is—(a) Immortal. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more." "Neither can they who are counted worthy to attain that world and the resurrection from the dead die any more." "Upon such the second death hath no power." (b) Incorruptible; and so the bodies of God's people will be free from all deformity and sin. "Sown in corruption" they shall be "raised in incorruption."

(c) Identical. As Christ was known after His resurrection, so every believer will be known to those with whom he conversed here. (d) Spiritual. Christ stood before His disciples when the doors were shut. And though we know little of the change which will pass upon us, we may safely believe that the body will be refined from all that now causes it to hang as a clog upon the aspirations and operations of the immaterial spirit. The senses will be wonderfully improved, so that we shall see God, hear the harmonies of the celestial choir, taste the rivers of pleasures, and speak the language of heaven. (2) Wondrous is this blessed hope; but let it not be thought incredible. As if to silence every objection, the text tells us that the transformation will be effected by the almighty power of God. (*G. Neat.*)

Christian citizenship :—I. THE HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP OF CHRISTIANS. 1. Their city—"heaven." The allusion here is to the love of a Jew, Greek, or Roman, for his metropolis. The apostle represents true Christians as composing a commonwealth whose city is not earthly, but the heavenly Jerusalem: the metropolis of the great empire of the universe where God dwells, where angels do His pleasure, where the spirits of good men are gathered, and to which all true Christians are continually ascending. 2. Their enrollment. Formerly they were "aliens," but they were invested with the citizenship by pardon. Upon the penitent acceptance of reconciliation through Christ their name is inscribed in the book of life. 3. Their privileges. (1) Freedom. That had an importance when the apostle wrote which it has not now. It is of little consequence to be free of any city, however distinguished, when the great body of the people are free. But in Rome the great body of the people were slaves. Every man who is not liberated by the grace of Christ is under the power of the god of this world. We have no proof of our citizenship unless we have been enabled by Divine power to break off our sins. (2) Admission to honourable employment and office. There is a diversity of offices, but every Christian is an official character and bears the honourable relation of priest in God's temple. The city is a holy city, a temple itself. (3) Fellowship with the whole body. (a) Saints on earth. Every Christian receives the benefit of the prayers of the millions of Christians who reside on earth. (b) Angels, who are ministering spirits. (c) God. (4) Right to common property. (a) The blessings of providence. (b) The benedictions and hopes of grace. (c) Heirship with the humanity of Jesus Christ. (d) Inheritance in God. II. THE CONDUCT MANIFESTED BY CHRISTIANS AND CORRESPONDING WITH THEIR PRIVILEGE. 1. This must be the conversation of the whole community. All collective bodies acquire a genius, a common character. The Greeks were remarkable for refinement, the Romans for a lofty ambition, the

citizens of heaven for holiness. The nations of them that are saved walk in the heavenly city clad in white as an emblem of purity, bearing palms as a symbol of victory. Unless our genius, our whole character, be holy, we do not carry about with us the mark of our city. If you are living under the influence of unsanctified passions, your claim of citizenship is unfounded. 2. We boast of the institutions of our city—"God forbid that I should glory," &c. Wherever there is a spirit of shame there is treachery, and wherever there is treachery Christ disowns us. 3. Courage. When the rulers saw the boldness of Peter and John, they took knowledge of them that they had been with Him who never knew how to fear man. This courage arises from the fact that every Christian is under the protection of his Lord. Wherever a Roman went his shield was the magistrate of Rome; wherever an Englishman goes he feels himself under the protection of his country. 4. Our citizenship will be seen in our spirit. We shall feel for the common cause, endeavour to spread the cause of Christ, and rejoice in seeing the heavenly city continually crowded with new inhabitants. 5. He who converses as a citizen of heaven has his affections there, and does not mind earthly things. How natural when at a distance from our native land or home to turn our thoughts towards it. What shall we say of citizens of heaven who never think of it, or to whom the thought is dull? 6. This heavenly state of mind can only be preserved by looking for the Saviour the Lord from heaven. (*R. Watson.*) *Heavenly Citizenship*:—By a city or state we understand a multitude or society of people, united in one body, governed by the same laws, enjoying the same rights, subject to the same prince, and having among them the same form of policy. From whence it is evident that the Christian Church is a state, since all these conditions belong to it. But this holy republic differs entirely from the kingdoms of the world in many respects, but more especially in this (which includes all the others,) that it is in heaven, whereas all others are on the earth (*Dan. ii. 44*). And therefore this state is called "the kingdom of heaven," "the city of God," "Jerusalem that is above," and "the new Jerusalem." And herein it differs not only from the kingdoms of this world, but from the state of Adam in Paradise and the Jews under the theocracy. This Divine city is really in heaven because—I. JESUS ITS PRINCE AND BUILDER IS HEAVENLY (*1 Cor. xv. 47*). Not formed of earth and dust like Adam, the head of the first republic; nor by virtue of flesh and blood like Moses, the founder of the Jewish polity; but formed of celestial mould and animated by the Holy Spirit. As His origin was heaven, so also is His abode there; there is His court, and the seat of His empire, whether you consider His Divine or human nature. For although as God He is everywhere, filling all space with His essence, yet Scripture particularly insists upon His presence in the heavens, because there is no place in the universe where that presence is so gloriously manifested, to the utter exclusion of sin, death, and sorrow. The palaces of princes, how magnificent soever they may be, are all here below; and even the Paradise destined for the habitation of man, though delightful was yet terrestrial. II. As our King is in the heavens, so FROM THENCE IS THE ROOT OF OUR EXTRACTION. True believers are not sprung from the dust as Adam, nor from the loins of Jacob as Israelites, but from the Eternal Spirit after the pattern of Christ (*John iii. 3-5*). For the Holy Spirit, rendering the Word of Life, which is the seed of our regeneration, fertile within us, forms us into new creatures, fit to enter into the heavenly state. III. THIS HEAVEN IS OUR HOME AND REST. We live on earth in the character of pilgrims and strangers till the work of our trial be completed. There already dwell the firstfruits of our society, and there will the remainder of the happy citizens assemble. Heaven is the eternal city to which we aspire. IV. In heaven are also to be found THE ARMIES OF OUR STATE; not weak soldiers armed with wood, or even iron, whose fidelity may be corrupted by the artifice of the enemy, whose strength may be weakened by a thousand casualties, and whose life may be taken by the sword; but immortal warriors, millions of angels clothed with wisdom and strength incorruptible. They watch over us night and day, and are sent here and there upon errands of mercy to us by our gracious Prince. V. In this same place are OUR DIGNITIES AND HONOURS PRESERVED; the thrones on which we shall hereafter sit; the cities of which our Master will give us the dominion in reward of our faithfulness; the incorruptible crowns with which He will ornament our foreheads; the kingdoms and priesthoods with which He will invest us. (*J. Dailé.*) *Our conversation in heaven*:—I. A HEAVENLY MINDEDNESS IS NECESSARY FOR THAT. 1. A heavenly mindedness must accompany a conversation in heaven; i.e., our heart is in heaven, our mind is directed thence. 2. As is the mind, so is the conduct. Worldly mindedness is enmity against Christ

and His Cross—the friendship of the world is enmity against God. 3. As is the conduct, so shall be the end. Contrast of the earthly and heavenly minded (vers. 19, 20). II. THERE MUST BE A CHANGE OF HEART IN US. 1. We must be translated into the kingdom of heaven. By nature we are not heavenly minded; selfishness, sin, has made us earthly minded, estranged our heart from God. 2. This change can be wrought only by faith in Christ. (*J. Neiling.*) *The Christian's relation to the heavenly world*.—I. WHAT THAT RELATION IS. Citizenship. 1. It is founded on the provisions of the evangelical economy. The object of that economy is the expression of God's love for man—the Father seeking His child. The relation of a believer to God is that of a child to a father. Hence in the gospel our privileges and prospects are all “because we are sons;” “if children, then heirs” (1 John iii. 1-2). 2. This relation is maintained by a corresponding spirit. Not only is thy name written in heaven, but the name of God is written in thy heart and life. The relation is not hereditary, but moral. It is (1) a spirit of abstraction from this world, not ascetic indeed, but that spirit which walks in the world, and displays its spirit and example to the world. They who would live for men must live with men. The Christian is here as a foreigner, but he cannot travel to his Father's house without being a blessing. (2) A spirit of devotion to that state of society to which he belongs, viz., heaven. (3) A spirit of solicitude for preparation to depart when called upon—“Looking for the Saviour.” II. THE BLISSFUL PROSPECT OF THE CHRISTIAN IN CONSEQUENCE OF THIS RELATION. We have here—1. A just representation of man at his best estate. He possesses a “body of humiliation.” The body is not abstractedly vile, and therefore we should not say that it is vile because it is dust, frail, &c. Nothing is vile that God has made; but the body reminds us of our humble state, and bears a brand it will never lose till the morning of the resurrection. 2. But it shall be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, the result of which will be the qualification of the transformed saints for heaven. III. THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH OUR CONFIDENCE IS REPOSED: the Saviour. 1. His promised appearance. 2. His omnipotent energy. (*T. Lessey.*) *The attractions of heaven*.—I. OUR CITIZENSHIP IS THERE. 1. We are born from; 2. Registered in; 3. Made meet for; 4. Admitted to the fellowship of heaven. II. OUR LORD IS THERE. 1. We look for His coming. 2. According to promise. 3. To complete our salvation. III. OUR CONSUMMATED HAPPINESS IS THERE. 1. The body will be changed and glorified. The purpose of grace fulfilled. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The characteristics of the true Christian*.—1. The present is not the principal state of man, and should never be viewed separate from another to which it bears the same relation as infancy to manhood, seed-time to harvest. 2. This consideration teaches us the true importance of the present period. The grand question is, Where are we to reside for ever? 3. Some never afford this subject a moment's thought, others remain in a state of uncertainty. But Christians, conscious of the reality of their religion and the blindness of their condition, say, “Our conversation is in heaven.” I. THE CHRISTIAN'S STATE. 1. The original sometimes signifies a certain alliance, and means citizenship; and sometimes a peculiar behaviour. The one infers and explains the other. The believer stands in connection with another world—“a better country, even an heavenly”; he is a citizen of no mean city—one “whose builder and maker is God.” How did a man boast in being a citizen of Rome! Think, then, what a privilege it is to belong to a state which “Eye hath not seen,” &c. Hence our Lord teaches His disciples to prefer their being registered there to the power and fame of working miracles. 2. As the Christian is allied to such a country, a suitable mode of living becomes him. A citizen of Rome could live in the most distant provinces. A citizen of heaven resides on earth, but he is a stranger and a foreigner. Though in the world he is not of it. And though certain purposes detain him here, his principles, habits, speech, show that he belongs to “a peculiar people.” He acts under an impression of heaven, and with reference to it. His chief care is to gain it. II. HIS EXPECTATION. 1. This reminds us of the present abode of the Redeemer. Hence we need not wonder that Christians should have their conversation there. Where their treasure is there is their heart. The removal of a dear friend will frequently render a place indifferent to us, and we change our neighbourhood to be near him. So rising with Christ we seek those things which are above, where He sitteth. 2. Though our Redeemer is now in heaven He will come thence. He does not forget His friends. He communicates with them, and supplies them, and has promised to “come again and receive them to Himself.” And how wonderful the difference between His former and His future coming. Then He was seen of few, now “every eye shall see

Him." Then "the world knew Him not"; now "we shall see Him as He is." Then "He was despised and rejected of men"; now He "shall come in the clouds of heaven, with all the holy angels." Then He was born in a stable and nailed to a cross; now "He shall sit on the throne of His glory." 3. The state of the Christian's mind with regard to this appearance. He looks for Him. (1) He believes His coming; and this distinguishes him from infidels. (2) He pays attention to His coming; and thus he is distinguished from nominal Christians. We prepare for the reception of a friend, much more for a king; but the Personage expected is the King of kings. And the Christian waits with his "loins girded and his lamps burning," and, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, lives soberly . . . looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing." 4. The character under which the Christian waits for Him—"The Saviour." This was the name given Him at His birth, because He should save His people from their sins. This work He is coming to finish. III. HIS DESTINY. 1. The subject changed. Much of the wisdom and power of God are displayed in the formation of the human frame, and therefore it cannot wholly be a "vile body." But when we view it as degraded by the Fall, as prostituted to the purposes of sin; when we think of its low and sordid appetites and infirmities, its diseases, its dissolution, we acknowledge the propriety of calling it a body of humiliation. But this body is not to be annihilated, only changed. 2. The model to which it will be conformed—"His glorious body." The comparison does not regard His body in the days of His flesh; but to the post-resurrection glorified body when it was free from everything animal and humiliating. A glimpse of His glory was given at the Transfiguration, to Saul, and to John. A conformity to this glory is not too great a privilege for our hope. As sure as we now resemble our Saviour in disposition shall we be like Him in person; and the same mind will be followed with the same body. 3. The omnipotent agency by which the work is to be accomplished. Such a renovation is nothing else than the most stupendous of miracles, and therefore it demands more than kindness to effect it. The re-animation and organization of millions of dead bodies will not exhaust Him who is able to subdue all things unto Himself. **Learn**—1. To be thankful for the discoveries of revelation. The wisest philosophers were worse off than the most illiterate of Christians. 2. The importance the Scripture attaches to the doctrine of the resurrection. The intermediate state is imperfect. Man was embodied in his original, and will be in his ultimate condition. 3. Let this thought be combined with the thought of death. (1) Remember it in view of your own dissolution, and, as you look toward the grave, take courage and drink in the revelation—"I am the Resurrection and the Life." (2) Remember it when you lose your pious friends. You have not parted from them for ever. 4. Are you the children of the resurrection? For though the resurrection as an event is universal, as a privilege it is limited. Can that be a deliverance which raises a man from a bad state and consigns him to a worse? (*W. Jay*.) **The heavenly citizenship**:—I. OUR CITIZENSHIP. 1. Its nature. 2. Its immunities. 3. Its responsibilities. II. OUR PRIVILEGE. 1. Citizens of no mean city. 2. The foundation of our right. 3. Its advantages. III. OUR DUTY. 1. To cultivate heavenly dispositions, affections, habits. 2. To glory in our privileges and prospects. 3. To labour for the enlargement of heaven. IV. OUR HOPE—the coming of Christ. 1. From whence? Heaven. 2. How? (1) Personally. (2) Gloriously. 3. What for? (1) To destroy His foes. (2) To save His people and introduce them to heaven. 4. Its certainty established by (1) His own promise. (2) The general testimony of revelation. (3) The purpose of God. 5. Its anticipation. (1) A duty. (2) Supposes faith, fitness, desire, research, active preparation. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **The perfect life**:—Paul is rebuking the world-life of his time. He tells the Philippians of the call to the higher life. As the "mind" of Christ is different from that of the world so is His "rule." It is described as a scheme of life introducing to the perfect condition of heaven, and forming part of it. The "perfect" Christian looks steadfastly up into heaven as containing Christ, and representing the law, ideal, and aim of his conduct. 1. ITS ORIGIN. 1. A spirit and outlook so ethereal must have a correspondingly lofty cause. A desire that reaches to heaven must have heaven for its source and attraction. 2. The spirit of man can, and has, become a partaker of the heavenly sphere while dwelling among earthly conditions. 3. What is it that links us with that sphere? Christ. His life imparted to us has created this other worldliness of thought, feeling, purpose. He is to us the embodiment of heaven, the centre of its interest and life. 4. The manner of His continuous influence is

expressed in the term "Saviour." It is a rescue of our spiritual nature from inertness and fatal debility, and through that it works upon the whole man towards the attainment of a far-reaching destiny. II. ITS METHOD OF DEVELOPMENT.

1. The circumstances in which our spiritual life is to be perfected are not completely realized in the present. 2. But our higher life has to commence amid earthly conditions. The defects and sins of our fellows have to be confronted, and our own failings and depravities have to be brought under. 3. In nature the rule is that the more complex and highly organized a living creature is the slower is its development. The young of animals attain the full use of their faculties much sooner than the child. But this life has its seat in the mind, and, considering this, we cannot wonder if it be slow. 4. It must also be uncertain. Frequent lapses, seasons of depression, periods of apparent standing still. Yet, on the whole, progress. Much of this uncertainty is due to the fact that it is a movement from body to spirit. Not only has it to assimilate truth, it has to contend with error and evil tendencies. The "body of humiliation" is the graveyard of many a hope, the register of many a sin, the condition of spiritual weakness. 5. A bodily principle will ever cleave to us, but it will be sublimated and made more amenable to the dictates of the Spirit. The perfect life is not realized in pure spirit; the salvation of the body is included. Laggard in the earthly development, it may in other realms be a true helpmeet and enricher of the spirit. 6. Christ in us is the hope and effectual realization of future glory for body and soul. III. ITS CULMINATING GLORY. The city, with its rights and privileges of citizenship, its order, law, society, and civilization in ancient times, constituted the haven of liberty and the sanctuary of the higher hopes of man. So Paul and John, when they contemplate the future, naturally think of it as an etherealized Rome or Jerusalem. It is a common life. We are to be perfected together. The society and political relationships of the world will have their correspondences on high. 1. Order and government will exist in the noblest forms. Righteousness will be the universal law. 2. Of this life the centre and sustaining power will be the Saviour. (A. F. Muir, M.A.)

Citizenship detected by speech:—Our very speech should be such that our citizenship should be detected. We should not be able to live long in a house without men finding out what we are. A friend of mine once went across to America, and landing I think at Boston, he knew nobody, but hearing a man say, when somebody had dropped a cask on the quay, "Look out there, or else you will make a Coggeshall job of it," he said, "You are an Essex man, I know, for that is a proverb never used anywhere but in Essex: give me your hand;" and they were friends at once. So there should be a ring of true metal about our speech and conversation, so that when a brother meets us, he can say, "You are a Christian, I know, for none but Christians speak like that, or act like that." "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth, for thy speech betrayeth thee." (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Preparing for home:—Some years ago a traveller, who had recently returned from Jerusalem, discovered, in conversation with Humboldt, that he was as thoroughly conversant with the streets and houses of Jerusalem as he was himself; whereupon he asked the aged philosopher how long it was since he visited Jerusalem. He replied, "I have never been there, but I expected to go sixty years since, and I prepared myself." Should not the heavenly home be as familiar to those who expect to dwell there eternally? (*Ibid.*) *Citizenship*:—1. By using this metaphor the apostle appealed to one of the strongest and purest feelings in the breasts of the men of that day. In modern times it is scarcely possible to appreciate the full force of such an appeal. One city will never again exert the influence of Rome, nor kindle a similar enthusiasm. Citizenship will never again be what it was in Rome. As a mother beloved her citizens cared for her, were proud of their connection with her, would spill their blood in her defence. For services endured, to enter Rome in triumph was the highest honour; to be banished for offences against her, the deepest disgrace. All that was worth living and dying for was implied in citizenship. It spoke of privileges to be preserved, traditions to be maintained, glory to be kept untarnished. 2. Such an appeal was appropriately made to the Philippians. Philippi was a military settlement (*colonia*), and its inhabitants had the privileges of Roman citizens. Here, too, it was that Paul stood on his dignity and right (Acts xvi. 17). Possibly the remembrance of these facts suggested the metaphor, though it would come naturally from the apostle writing from Rome. 1. The metaphor would suggest CERTAIN TESTS BY WHICH A CITIZEN OF THE HEAVENLY CITY MAY BE DISTINGUISHED FROM A MERE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD. A good citizen—1. Will conform to the laws of his city. Are we obeying the laws of heaven? 2. Will oppose the enemies of

his city. Are we fighting against sin, or are we at peace with evil? 3. Will be active and zealous in all that concerns the welfare and advancement of his city. Is the petition, "Thy kingdom come" an utterance of the lips only, or the acted prayer of our lives? 4. Will subordinate private and personal interests to the interests of his city. Are our lives characterized by self-seeking or self-surrender? 5. Will fear to disgrace the good name and honourable tradition of his city. Do we behave as citizens worthy of the gospel of Christ? (Phil. i. 27). II. The metaphor may remind us of the NATURE OF THE EARTHLY LIFE. It is a pilgrimage. Man has not reached that perfect home where his full powers can be developed and exercised, and his loftiest expectations realized. The noblest of all ages have felt this. The "Republic" of Plato is an acknowledgment of it, while the testimony of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs is unanimous (Heb. xi. 13-16, cf. Gen. xliii. 9; 1 Cor. xxix. 15; Ps. xxix. 12, cxix. 19; 1 Peter i. 17; ii. 11). Pilgrims may admire the varied beauty, and enjoy the richness and fertility of the lands through which they pass, but their thoughts and deepest affections will be homewards. They will live in a condition of expectancy, which will determine the character of all their relations to the land of their sojourn. So the citizens of heaven, while thanking God for every good and perfect gift, will nevertheless regard all earthly beauty, richness, and joy but as a type of the spiritual things which God has prepared for those who love Him in the perfect city which "eye hath not seen," &c. (L. Shackleford.) *Our heavenly citizenship*:—I. THE MEANS OF ENTRANCE. There are only three ways by which men can become citizens; by all three are we citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. 1. By purchase. He who was King of that beautiful city gave up His kingdom for a season that He might buy for us an admission to it. 2. By gift. Thus God speaks to those who "take hold of My covenant, even unto them will I give in My house . . . a place and a name." "He that overcometh . . . I will write upon him the name . . . of the city of my God." 3. By birth. Because birth is better than purchase or gift we are born again that we should have our settlement no longer in a slavish world, but be born free. II. THE TIME—Now. It would be much if we could say, "Our citizenship will be in heaven"; but we can affirm that it is so. III. THE RIGHTS. 1. Immunities. Doubtless it is because there are so many immunities that heaven is generally described by negatives—no tears, divisions, sighs, temptations, conflicts, labour, sin, death. And if we could receive it all these immunities are now for us. For if Christ has borne our sins, where can there be any condemnation? What labour can there be that is not rest? 2. Privileges. (1) It is the privilege of every citizen to be represented. Accordingly Christ has gone into the heavens to do and say what we cannot do and say. (a) He represents us as a substitute, showing in heaven His wounds and sufferings that we may have none. (b) As a forerunner, that we may ultimately sit where He sits, and joy as He joys. (2) A citizen is under the laws of His own state and no other. He may appeal up to this. We are under the law of liberty, and are judged by no man. (3) A citizen may go in and out. Is he not free of his own state? But ours is a holy liberty. (4) A citizen has a right to go to the presence of the King. We have free access to the throne of grace. IV. THE OBLIGATIONS. 1. Every man's heart ought to be at his own home, and if heaven be your home your heart is there. You may go up and down in the necessary things of this world, and be like the traveller in a foreign country, always gathering something you can take home. There will be nothing worth much to you which has not something of heaven in it. 2. You must be a loyal subject; and if so you will carry the glory of the kingdom to which you belong as a trust, and try to extend its influence. There will be nothing so dear to you as to make that city and its king dear to somebody. (J. Vaughan, M.A.) *Citizenship in heaven*:—There can be no comparison between a soaring seraph and a crawling worm: there ought to be none between Christians and men of the world, only a contrast. If we were what we profess to be we should be as distinct a people as a white race in Ethiopia. There should be no more difficulty in distinguishing the Christian from the worldly than the sheep from the goat. I. If our citizenship be in heaven then WE ARE ALIENS HERE. "We have no continuing city," but "desire a better country." Yet, though strangers and foreigners on earth, we share all the inconveniences of the flesh. No exemption is granted us from the common lot of mankind. In times of adversity we suffer, and in prosperous times we share the bounty of the God of providence. 1. A good man will not live a week in a foreign land without seeking to do good. The Good Samaritan sought the good not only of the Samaritans but

of the Jews. Since we are here "to do good and to communicate" we must "forget not;" we must act as recruiters for the better land. 2. It behoves aliens to keep themselves quiet. What business have foreigners to plot against a country of which they are not citizens. So in the world we must be orderly sojourners, submitting ourselves constantly to those in authority, leading peaceable lives, fearing God, honouring the king, "submitting to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." 3. As aliens we have privileges as well as duties. The prince of this world may make his vassals serve him, but he cannot raise a conscription upon aliens. The child of God claims an immunity from the commands of Satan. 4. As we are free from the conscription of the state we are not eligible to its honours. An Englishman at New York is not eligible for the Presidency. It is of ill omen to hear the world say "Well done" to the Christian man. 5. As aliens it is not for us to hoard up this world's treasures. The money of this world is not current in Paradise, and when we reach it, if regret is possible, we shall wish that we had laid up more treasure in our fatherland.

II. **THOUGH ALIENS ON EARTH WE ARE CITIZENS OF HEAVEN.** 1. We are under heaven's government. Christ, its King, reigns in us; its laws are the laws of our consciences; our daily prayer is, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." 2. We share heaven's honours. The glory which belongs to beatified saints is ours, for we are already sons of God, wear the robe of Christ's righteousness, have angels for our servitors. 3. We have common rights in the property of heaven. "Things present or things to come; all are ours." 4. We enjoy the delights of heaven. 5. Our names are written in the roll of heaven's free men.

III. **OUR WALK AND ACTS ARE SUCH AS ARE CONSISTENT WITH OUR DIGNITY AS HEAVENLY CITIZENS.** Among the old Romans, when a dastardly act was proposed, it was thought a sufficient refusal to say *Romanus sum*. Surely it should be a sufficient incentive to every good thing if we can claim to be freemen of the eternal city. 1. In heaven they are holy; so must we be if our citizenship is not a mere pretence. 2. They are happy; so we must rejoice in the Lord always. 3. They are obedient; so we must follow the faintest monitions of the Divine will. 4. They are active; so, day and night, we should be praising and serving God. 5. They are peaceful; so we should find rest in Christ.

IV. **We might read our text as though it said OUR COMMERCE IS IN HEAVEN.** We are trading on earth, but the bulk of our trade is with heaven. 1. By meditation. 2. By thought. 3. In our hymns. There is a song which the band is forbidden to play to the Swiss soldiery in foreign lands, because it reminds them of the cowbells of their native hills. If the men hear it they are sure to desert. So there are some of our hymns which make us homesick. 4. By hopes and loves. It is right that the patriot should love his country. 5. Just as people in a foreign land are always glad to have letters from their country, I hope we have much communication with our fatherland, both from and to. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

The true Christian:—I. THE CHRISTIAN IS A PILGRIM AND A STRANGER UPON EARTH. 1. This world is not destined to be his home; and in his application of the knowledge of this fact lies the difference between him and other men. Men in general live as if they would live for ever. But the very nature of the Christian, his knowledge of his situation, and the prospects he has in view, all conspire to banish from him that delusion. 2. The Christian, being in this situation, is exposed to many hardships. He is far from home, and is deprived of its comforts. He cannot relish the pleasures of the world like the votaries of mammon. He may linger for a moment on his journey in the enjoyment of those pleasures which, being innocent in themselves, he is permitted to enjoy; but neither his own feelings nor his external situation will permit him to continue. II. **THE CHRISTIAN IS IN THE ENJOYMENT OF PECULIAR PRIVILEGES.** Even the boasted privileges of imperial Rome dwindle into nothing in comparison. 1. The inhabitant of any country is under the protection of the government to which he belongs, wherever he is placed. So the Christian is everywhere under the protection of the Almighty. Surely, then, he ought never to be alarmed at the prospect of calamity. Should it come it will work for good. 2. The Christian is indebted to the care and protection of his fellow-citizens. He is encompassed by an angelic host who watch his steps and shield him from danger. 3. In becoming a citizen of heaven the Christian is highly honoured. This honour arises out of his own nature and the nature of heaven. In himself man is a degraded being; yet sanctified he becomes the favourite of heaven in the present life, and will be exalted at last to God's right hand. And what is implied in this exaltation who can tell. III. **THE CHRISTIAN IS DISTINGUISHED BY A PECULIAR MODE OF CONDUCT.** 1. Every true citizen is obviously a patriot, no matter whether his country be beautiful or barren. There are few

passions so strong as love of country, and none have given birth to nobler actions. The Christian is also a patriot, and in disinterested attachment to his country and readiness to die a martyr in her cause is surpassed by none; and, considering what that country is, no wonder. 2. Every good citizen must observe the laws of his country, and for this the Christian is distinguished. God's laws are his continual study, are sweeter than honey, their observance is his delight, their transgression his deepest sorrow. 3. Every good citizen must love his fellow-citizens, and love to the brethren is a marked characteristic of Christians. IV. THE CHRISTIAN CHERISHES AN ACQUAINTANCE AND HOLDS COMMUNION WITH HEAVEN. 1. If there be a Christian with whom this is not the case the carnal policy of men will furnish him with an instructive lesson. Men do not emigrate to a land without knowing its nature. The Christian must know something of heaven, and be convinced that its nature is congenial with his own. 2. The employments of the celestial world are in unison with the feelings of its citizens, whether on earth or in heaven. The Christian's affections are set not on earth but on things above. 3. Intercourse with heaven is chiefly effected by prayer, and is with the Father and the Son. This intercourse makes the place of it, wherever it may be, the house of God and the gate of heaven. 4. The effects of this communion are most valuable, and felt in adversity. If we have, then, no friend to whom we can unbosom our griefs we are wretched indeed. But the Christian has a Friend whose ear is ever open and whose hand is ever ready. V. HEAVEN IS THE CHRISTIAN'S ETERNAL HOME. (*J. Stark.*) *Heavenly citizenship*.—I. CHRISTIANS ARE CITIZENS OF HEAVEN. 1. By birth. Thus was Paul a Roman citizen. We may well claim for our country the place from which we derived our life. 2. By enrollment. All who are born from above are registered from above. Their names are "written in the Lamb's book of life." No objection urged against the entry shall be deemed valid. 3. By affinity. As strangers yearn for the home of their birth, so we have instincts and desires which point to a heavenly origin. Thus streams flow towards the ocean, and flames ascend to the sun. 4. Our education is a further evidence. A child's future may be inferred from the instruction which fits him for it. Travellers preparing for a foreign residence learn the language. So Christians are educated for heaven. This is the object of afflictions. Earthly trial is heavenly discipline, and works out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 5. The exercise of our Christian graces indicates where our country is. (1) Faith is the substance of the heaven hoped for, the evidence of the glory unseen. (2) Hope's object and realization is heaven. (3) Charity, while finding scope for exercise here, has for her true home, and her full and everlasting development, the New Jerusalem. 6. Our citizenship is in heaven because our Father's home is there. Where He dwells we cannot be strangers. "Our Father which art in heaven." 7. This, too, is the residence of the King, and therefore the city of His friends and subjects. 8. There our friends are gathering. 9. Heaven is our home, and we are expected there. II. Heaven being our city, our LIFE SHOULD BE HEAVENLY. Admiring the beauties with which the Creator has decked the earth; thankfully enjoying the gifts of His providence; humanly feeling for our own and others' sorrows; diligently performing our duties, &c., let us bear about us the inspiring assurance that our conversation is in heaven. 1. Let us not, in the pursuit of any earthly object, be so eager as to absorb our thoughts. Let us not be elated by prosperity, nor depressed by adversity. 2. Let us prize our vocation above all our other possessions and privileges. Are men zealous in attaining earthly distinctions? Let us "give all diligence to make our calling and election sure." The holy alone are enrolled as citizens of heaven. 3. The honour and interests of our country are committed to us. As an Englishman abroad ought to feel that the honour of his country is compromised by his conduct, and that he must act as a representative of his nation; so let us while strangers and sojourners remember that we are representatives of heaven. 4. As a loyal citizen desires to promote the prosperity of his country so should we try to promote the best interests of the Church. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Heavenly Citizenship*.—The proper country of a real Christian is not that in which he first drew breath, nor that in which God has fixed the bounds of his earthly habitation. 1. HE IS CITIZEN OF A CITY OF WHICH EXCELLENT THINGS ARE SPOKEN. 1. It is beautiful for situation (Psa. xlviii. 2). In this respect no other can be compared to it, for it stands not on earth but in heaven. 2. Its foundations are most gloriously laid (Eph. ii. 20). 3. Its builder is God (Heb. xi. 10). 4. It will survive every other city, being "eternal in the heavens." 5. Its strength is invincible (Isa. xxvi. 1). 6. It is distinguished from every other city by its inhabitants (Heb. xii. 23), who

are all holy (Rev. xxi. 27), and all happy (Rev. xxi. 4; Isa. xxxv. 10). 7. But the grand distinction is its King (Rev. xxii. 3-5). II. HOW MAY HE BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE CITIZENS OF THE WORLD? 1. By the dress he wears. This is how we distinguish inhabitants of different countries. We read that the saints are clothed in white robes, having been washed in the blood of the Lamb. But they were washed and first worn here. 2. By his language. Different nations are distinguished by different tongues. The language spoken in Jerusalem above is that of love and holiness (Psa. cxlix. 6), but it was learned and first used here (Eph. iv. 29; Psa. xv. 3). 3. By his works. The occupation of the saints in light is the continual service of God (Rev. vii. 15); so is that of the saints below (Rom. xii. 1). 4. By his constant communications with his city. (*A. Roberts, M.A.*) *The happiness of a heavenly conversation*:—To have our conversation in heaven implies—I. THE SERIOUS THOUGHTS AND CONSIDERATIONS OF HEAVEN. 1. The happiness of this state. (1) It is incomparably beyond any happiness in this world. (a) None of the comforts of this life are pure and unmingled. There is something of vanity and vexation of spirit in all our enjoyments, either in getting, having, or after them. But the happiness of the next world is without alloy (Rev. xxii. 3-5). (b) The enjoyments of this life are uncertain. When we think we have fastened hold of them they often slip out of our hands. The very greatness of an estate has been the cause of the loss of both it and its owner; but the happiness of heaven is as unchangeable as the fountain from which it springs. (c) The enjoyments of the world are unsatisfying. Either we, or the things of this world, or both, are so fantastical that we can neither be well with them nor well without them. If we be hungry, we are in pain; if full, uneasy; if poor, we think ourselves miserable; if rich, really so. Nay, so far from affording satisfaction, the sweetest of them is most apt to satiate and cloy us. If they go off quickly they signify nothing, and if they stay long we are sick of them. But the delights of the other world as they will give us full satisfaction, so we shall never be weary of them. (2) It is very great in itself. Its chief ingredients are—(a) Perfection of knowledge. What can be more delightful than to have our understanding entertained with a clear sight of the best and most perfect Being, with the knowledge of all His works, and the wise designs of His providence. The Queen of Sheba thought Solomon's servants happy in having the opportunity of standing before him to hear his wisdom; but in the other world it shall be a happiness to Solomon himself to stand before God, to admire His wisdom and behold His glory. (b) The most delightful exercise of love. What greater happiness can be imagined than to converse freely with the most excellent, without anything of folly, disguise, jealousy, or design upon one another? for then there will be none of those vices and passions of covetousness, hatred, envy, ambition, wrath, and peevishness which now spoil the pleasure and disturb the quiet of mankind. All quarrels and contentions will be effectually hindered, not by force, but by love; and all those controversies in religion, which are now hotly agitated, will then be finally determined, not as we endeavour to aid them now, by canons and decrees, but by a perfect knowledge and convincing light. (c) And when this blessed society is met together, and thus united by love, they shall all join in gratitude to Him who hath so blessed them. (3) This happiness shall be eternal. If the happiness of heaven were such as the joys of this world, it were fit they should be as short; but being so excellent it would scarce be a happiness if not eternal, if we could see the end of them at never so great a distance. (4) It is far above anything we can now conceive. (a) In this imperfect state we are not capable of a full representation. That would let in joys upon us too big for our narrow capacities, too strong for weak mortality (1 Cor. xiii. 9-11). (b) But no sooner shall we enter upon the joys of the other world but our minds will be raised to a strength and activity as much above that of the most knowing persons in this world as the thoughts of the wisest philosopher are above those of a child. 2. The means whereby we may come to be partakers of this happiness—holiness (Heb. v. 9; Titus ii. 11-12; Heb. xii. 14). (1) Holiness is not only a condition but a necessary qualification. This is the force of St. John's reasoning (1 John iii. 1-3). "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." To see God is to be happy; but unless we be like Him we cannot be happy. The sight and presence of God would be no happiness to the man who is not like God in disposition. From hence he infers, "every man that hath this hope," &c. (2) This life is our preparation for the future. It is true that heaven perfects those holy dispositions which are begun here, but it alters no man as to his main state. "He that is filthy let him be filthy still." The happiness of heaven consists in such things as a wicked

man has no relish for. If a covetous, ambitious, voluptuous man were in heaven he would be tormented with a continual thirst for which there was no gratification. All the joys of that place are purely spiritual and can only be relished by those who have purified themselves as God is pure. (3) From all this it appears how necessary it is for us to prepare ourselves for this blessed state by the constant endeavours of a holy life. Until this be done we are not meet to be partakers of its felicities.

II. THE EFFECT WHICH THESE CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD HAVE ON OUR HEARTS AND LIVES.

1. To convince us of the vanity of this world God has on purpose made it troublesome that there might be no sufficient temptation to reasonable men to take them off from the thoughts of their future happiness; that God and heaven might have no rival here. 2. To make us industrious to be and do good that we may be qualified for future happiness. Men are very industrious to be rich and great; did we value heaven half as much as it deserves we should take infinitely more pains to secure it. And how should the thought that we are hastening towards another world, and that our eternal happiness is at stake quicken our endeavours.

3. To mitigate the afflictions of this life. No matter how rough the way provided it leads to happiness (Rom. viii. 18). The evils of this life afflict men more or less according as the soul is fortified with considerations proper to support us under them. And when we are safely landed, with what pleasure shall we look back upon those boisterous sins we have escaped. 4. To make us sincere in our professions and actions. Did men firmly believe the reward of another world, their religion would not be only in show and pretence, but in life and reality. For there we shall be rewarded not for what we seemed to be, but for what we really were. 5. To arm us against the fear of death. (Archbp. Tillotson.)

*A heavenly mind here:—*1. Whatever incompatibility there may be between having a residence in one world and a conversation in another, Christianity boldly meets it and puts it out of the way. In old English a man's "conversation" meant not the mere act of his tongue, but his conduct, and so revealed to what kingdom his heart belonged. An American agent or ambassador has a temporary dwelling in Athens. Living on that foreign soil, occupied daily with its affairs, its landscape winning his admiration, and its faces and manners his goodwill, he remembers that his stay is short; he expects to be called back where his treasure is and his heart abides. 2. When our faith commands us to have our conversation in heaven it does not require us to be bad citizens of the world where we now are. We are not bidden to be absent minded. The man may make hearty attachments where he tarries, pay tribute and live cheerfully and helpfully. And yet none the less he desires a better country, a city first in his love and always in his hopes. So Christ teaches that we can be faithful to every present relationship, and yet never forget our celestial patriotism. We can be in the world without minding earthly things. 3. This glory is the original glory of our Christian estate. Till Christ came, the majestic fact that our little human tent is overarched by an infinite heaven of light scarcely anywhere broke through the pagan shadows. Men as a rule looked downward at matter, and their conversation was this world's wars and lusts. In Asiatic pomp there was not one house of charity; in Alexandrian science not one school of virtue; in Greek beauty no beauty of holiness; in the discipline of Roman armies no heavenly law of righteousness. 4. In the midst of such a society we see Paul saying, "Our conversation," &c. The earthly and the heavenly mind, then. The choice between these is what the gospel is pressing on our conscience. I. WHAT HINDERS. It is said "We must take the world as it is. It is no use flying in the face of an immense majority. Your ideal is lovely and well enough as a seventh-day picture of impossible sanctity. But while we live in an earthly commonwealth, if we expect to get on with it we must keep on pleasant terms with it, and not be over critical as to its principles." 1. If this answer were valid it would settle the whole question on the anti-Christian side. The Church would be an organized failure. Instead of fearless witnessing for Christ and fighting against wrong, we should have a cowardly system of mutual compromises and flatteries. 2. But then even the careless mind has a deeper-toned conviction than this. Most people know that the principal glories of the past have gathered round a few brave and suffering men who have stood out against their times. Inward voices respond in almost every breast to the righteousness of this order of souls. 3. Before they give away their manhood for the sake of getting on with the world, some citizens will inquire to what end the world is getting on. 4. And then, whatever we say or do, the Word of God refuses to be altered, and tells us not only that we can but we must, unless we mean to die eternally, live above the world while we live in it. 5. Besides,

falsehood and sensuality were never prevalent enough to incapacitate a man for a clean and godly life, if that soul willed it. 6. Nothing in society or custom takes off the wrong doer's sin or its retribution. There lives a God with whom multitudes, usages, &c., are not of the least account. We cannot say at the Divine tribunal, "Blame society; I only went with the rest, and was no worse than they." You may presume that offences will come, but "woe to that man by whom they come."

II. CHRISTIANITY MEANS TO REACH SOCIETY ON A BROAD SCALE, BUT IT MUST REACH IT THROUGH PERSONS GATHERED ONE BY ONE INTO ITS OWN HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP. It has to do with conviction, affection, faith; and these are properties of individuals before they can be of communities. Christ did not publish a plan of political reform, or a schedule of social science. Meeting his countrymen in little groups, or one by one, He showed them the beauty of the heavenly conversation while they were fishermen or publicans. So began the everlasting empire which soon lifted itself over the palaces of Constantinople and Rome. We all desire ours to be a Christian country; then we must be Christian men.

III. THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT CONSCIOUSLY MADE UP THEIR MINDS TO KEEP GOD'S COMMANDMENTS OUT AND OUT, WHO YET WOULD BE SHOCKED AT THE IDEA OF OUR SOCIAL LIFE RETURNING TO BARBARISM; and others nominally Christian who make no pretence to conform their practice to Christ's law. But this notion that we are any safer and better for living in a land of professed Christianity whose principles we daily ignore is a delusion whose absurdity is seen as soon as stated. What we need to realize is that every scheme attempting to cure the morals of the people must fail unless it puts the soul into a direct conversation with Him.

IV. IN THESE TIMES THE FAITH IS PUT BACK NOT SO MUCH BY PERSECUTION AS CORRUPTION. We live in days of indulgence and education. Ever since Eve's parley it has been the strategy of evil to gain admission without having its character suspected. If the moral sense is obstinate reach it to call evil good. If conscience defies a sword drug it with narcotics. Once radically unsettle a man's mind as to the obligations of duty, and you work a far more comprehensive depravity in him than by only enticing him now and then into single bad actions against which his conscience continues to cry out.

V. SO THE TRUE CONFESSORS OF THIS AGE ARE THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO EXERCISE THEIR CONSCIENCES DAY BY DAY TO DISCERN BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL; souls that keep so far back within the entrenchments of a heavenly citizenship as to be out of all risk of slipping over into dishonour; men of business who will not take a second look at the tempter for an additional thousand a year; women who choose that good part with Mary's friend, rather than wade through ambiguities neck deep to conquests of social ambition; children that would rather be laughed at than disobey.

VI. THERE ARE TWO WORLDS WITHIN US, AS WELL AS EARTH AND HEAVEN WITHOUT US; and one of them is apt to get the mastery. Take as the Divine image of the one, the Saviour's sacramental prayer in John xvii., or St. Paul's description, at the close of Romans viii. of the love of God. For the other take any unbelieving sensualist's frank testimony: Lord Chesterfield's, e.g. "I have run the rounds of business and pleasure, and have done with them all. Shall I tell you that I bear this melancholy situation with resignation? No; I bear it because I must. I think of nothing but killing time, now it has become my enemy, and my resolution is to sleep in the carriage to the end of the journey." Now to say nothing of what happens when the journey ends, and of the waking out of sleep, and of the new question that will rise before a man who has so poorly succeeded in killing time, that time killed him—viz., how to kill eternity—leaving all that, we see the contradiction between the two worlds complete. The warfare between the principles that lie at the roots of them is a deadly warfare, and still it goes on. Take sides then at once with God and heaven. (Bp. Huntington.)

Citizenship and conversation.—It is not difficult to see how the "citizenship" comes to be called "conversation." "Conversation" is "being conversant." When we talk together, it is called "conversation." Because we are "conversant" with the subject, therefore it is called "conversation." And "conversant" means "going up and down in a thing." That is the literal meaning of the word. And we "go up and down," we move about in, and therefore we are conversant with the things, and the people, and the city, to which we belong. So "citizenship" is called "conversation." "Our conversation"—our familiar habits, our daily life and routine, that with which we have to do,—our conversation, our citizenship, is in heaven." (J. Vaughan, M.A.)

Heavenly citizenship.—As the conversation of the Israelites was in the temple of Jerusalem, however distant they might be from it with regard to the body, because to it their thoughts and affections turned; towards that place

they lifted their eyes in prayer when absent, and from thence expected the required succour, no captivity, no misfortune obliterating the memory of that holy sanctuary, the source of all their joys: so also the Christian beholds in heaven the true Ark, the Lord Christ, where all the fulness of the Godhead dwells, not in types and figures as in the Mosaic ark, but in truth and reality. In heaven their faith dwells, their hope rests, elevated above all terrestrial things, penetrating within the veil, anchoring upon the Rock of Ages. There dwells the soul in love; and beholding throughout the rest of the universe nothing but vanity and sin, it retires continually into this heavenly palace, where it may worship the Lord in spirit and in truth (Col. ii. 1-2). (*J. Dailée*). *The manifestation of the citizenship*.—We should, in fact, seek while we are here to keep up the manners and customs of the good old fatherland, so that, as in Paris, the Parisian soon says, "There goes John Bull," so they should be able to say in this land, "There goes a heavenly citizen, one who is with us, and among us, but is not of us." (*C. H. Spurgeon*). *The citizenship maintained by communications with the mother country*.—We send our prayers there as letters to our Father, and we get His letters back in this blessed volume of His word. You go into an Australian settler's hut, and you find a newspaper. Where from, sir? A gazette from the south of France, a journal from America? Oh no, it is a newspaper from England, addressed to him in his old mother's handwriting, bearing the postage stamp with the good Queen's face in the corner; and he likes it, though it be only a newspaper from some little pottering country town, with no news in it; yet he likes it better, perhaps, than *The Times* itself, because it talks to him about the village where he lived, and consequently touches a special string in the harp of his soul. So must it be with heaven. This book, the Bible, is the newspaper of heaven, and therefore we must love it. The sermons which are preached are good news from a far country. The hymns we sing are notes by which we tell our Father of our welfare here, and by which He whispers into our soul His continued love to us. All these are and must be pleasant to us, for our commerce is with heaven. I hope, too, we are sending a good deal home. I like to see our young fellows when they go out to live in the bush, recollect their mother at home. They say "She had a hard struggle to bring us up when our father died, and she scraped her little together to help us to emigrate." John and Tom mutually agree, "the first gold we get at the diggings we will send home to mother." And it goes home. Well, I hope you are sending a great many things home. I hope as we are aliens here, we are not laying up our treasures here, where we may lose it, but packing it off as quickly as we can to our own country. There are many ways of doing it. God has many banks; and they are all safe ones. We have but to serve His Church, or serve the souls which Christ has bought with His blood, or help His poor, clothe His naked, and feed His hungry, and we send our treasures beyond sea in a safe ship, and so we keep up our commerce with the skies. (*Ibid*). *The certificate of home*.—A peasant girl intently watching the bears at Berne, allowed her bag containing various homely treasures to slip from her arm. One of the bears immediately seized it and began in a way that would have been extremely comical, but for the poor girl's distress, to pull out the articles, one by one, before tearing them to pieces. The keeper not being within reach, no rescue was possible, and for a few moments the poor peasant wept as if her heart would break. At length a bright thought struck her, and putting her hand into the bosom of her dress she drew from it a paper, and exclaimed with joy, "It is my certificate of home; thank God this bear has not got that." Now this *Heimath Schein*, as it is called in Switzerland and Germany, is necessary as a passport. Without it she could not have left her country, and was liable at any time to be imprisoned as unable to prove herself a member of the canton. The Christian, too, has his "certificate of home," and need never be inconsolable while he can put his hand upon that, whatever else may have fallen under the power of the destroyer. (*Sunday at Home*). *The influence of heavenly mindedness*.—As the daily business of the royal observatory is rarely mentioned or thought of in the traffic and bustle of the world, though it stands in intimate and vital relations to navigation and commerce, and so to all the interests of society; so the men and women whose "conversation is in heaven," although they may appear unpractical to some thoughtless persons, are able to give the soundest advice, and to exert the most beneficent influence. (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *Citizenship a revealer*.—As the spear of Milton's Ithuriel had the power, by its touch, of making evil spirits stand forth in their native blackness and uncomeliness, however skilfully they had disguised themselves as angels of light; so the

Christian's sense of his relation to heaven reveals to his heart the essential vanity and despicableness of any form of life which is alien from the will of God. The application of the touchstone question, "How would such conduct answer in heaven? How would such conduct become one who hopes for heaven, and deems himself a citizen of heaven?"—this shows things as they are. (*R. Johnstone, I.L.B.*) *From whence we look for the Saviour*:—Sometimes I wait through the weary years with great comfort. There was a ship some time ago outside a certain harbour. A heavy sea made the ship roll fearfully. A dense fog blotted out all buoys and lights. The captain never left the wheel. He could not tell his way into the harbour, and no pilot could get out to him for a long time. Eager passengers urged him to be courageous and make a dash for the harbour. He said "No; it is not my duty to run so great a risk. A pilot is required here, and I will wait for one if I wait a week." The truest courage is that which can bear to be charged with cowardice. To wait is much wiser than when you cannot hear the fog-horn and have no pilot yet to steam on and wreck your vessel on the rocks. Our prudent captain waited his time, and at last he espied the pilot's boat coming to him over the boiling sea. When the pilot was at his work the captain's anxious waiting was over. The Church is like that vessel, she is pitched to and fro in the storm and the dark, and the pilot has not yet come. The weather is very threatening. All around the darkness hangs like a pall. But Jesus will come, walking on the water, before long; He will bring us safe to the desired haven. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 21. Who shall change our vile body.—*The humiliation and glorification of the body*:—I. OUR PRESENT STATE OF EXISTENCE IS ONE OF MUCH HUMILIATION. We are in vile bodies—1. If you remember their origin. They are formed from the earth. We are indeed "curiously wrought," and exhibit proofs of the goodness, wisdom, and power of God: but let the body be analyzed, and decomposed, and wherein does it differ from the dust we despise? "God knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust." What a fine lesson of humility is here. 2. Our bodies are tainted with sin and therefore vile. Always connect with the meanness of your origin the idea that you are infected with iniquity. We have unclean bodies which are the prisons of our souls. You have but to reflect on your proneness to impurity, to forgetfulness of God, and what but for Adam's fall you might have been, to warrant your saying "behold I am vile." 3. Our bodies are exposed to sickness, and destined to death. "Thou shalt eat bread in sorrow till thou return to the ground." All this is true of all, and yet how many try to hide it in the elaborate trickery of dress and the disgraceful vanities of the age. The body is only valuable as the casket of an inestimable jewel. II. THE ENNOBLING CHANGE WHICH SHALL PASS ON THAT WHICH IS NOW SUBJECT TO HUMILIATION. It is not intended for our state of vileness to last. To shut out as infidels do the prospects of futurity is an act of unparalleled madness. In the gospel life and immortality are brought to light. But the specific hope of the text is not for those who are "enemies of the Cross," &c., but for those who "count all things loss," &c. 1. The time when this great and ennobling change is to occur. At the coming of Christ at the general resurrection; when the universe shall sink in years, the elements melt with fervent heat, when the last moment of time shall pass, and the whole of our race be assembled. 2. The precise nature of this change—like unto the Saviour's glorious body. (1) In spirituality. The earthliness of our bodies will be removed, and made light and buoyant, no more gross and material; "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. (2) In holiness. On earth He was "holy, harmless, undefiled" and is so now. None can enter heaven without holiness: therefore our bodies will be purged of sin. (3) In immortality. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more." "Because I live, ye shall live also." The immortal Saviour shall reign over an immortal people. 3. The specific agency by which this great change shall be effected. (1) By Him whom we call Lord and God. If there be any who are ready to take Him down from His Divine elevation let them mark this Divine prerogative. "As the Father raiseth up the dead," &c. (Rom. xiv. 9). (2) By His mighty power. What power must he have who raises the dead? (3) The particular principle is that by which He is able to subdue all things. III. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS CHANGE OUGHT TO BE MADE A MATTER OF JOYFUL EXPECTATION. The great sin of men is not looking forward. For time they are ready to give all; for eternity nothing. But we Christians look for the coming of Christ—1. As we hate sin, because we shall then be perfectly holy. 2. As we desire communion with

God, because we shall see Him as He is, and be made like Him. 3. As we wish to arrive at the true grandeur and perfection of our nature, because we shall be changed into the image of moral beauty. 4. As we desire the perfect triumphs of the Redeemer's kingdom, because then all things shall be put under His feet. 5. As we desire a meeting with all the great and good, because then we shall rejoice in an association with the family of God for ever. (*J. Parsons.*) *The vile body made glorious*:—The word "vile," in ordinary usage, represents that which is mean and despicable. This is not the thought of the Apostle Paul. The substance of the body is not in itself vile. There is nothing vile in the elements of the human frame or in their combination. The construction of the body is not vile. There is so much of Divine design, wisdom, and skill displayed in every part of the human body, that the attributes of the Creator seem to be enthroned or enshrined in it. The uses of the body are not vile, so far, at least, as the body is rightly used, and the members are instruments of righteousness unto God. It is not Paul's habit to speak in contempt of the human frame. The body is, nevertheless, as the subject of disease and infirmity, as sustained by toil and by the sweat of the brow, as appointed to die, and as liable to the motions of sin, in a state of debasement. It is in a state of humiliation. I. THE CHANGE HERE PREDICTED. 1. The transformation in substance. This will consist in the change of the present natural material, to what the apostle calls "spiritual." There is almost a contradiction involved in speaking of any substance as being spiritual, but we see very many changes in the substance of nature which are very like a change from that which is grossly material, to that which is refined and spiritual. Take, say, a lump of rough ice. Apply heat to it; and the change effected is to water. The material is nearer the spiritual as water than it was as ice. Continue to apply heat to this melted ice, and you get from it a cloud of vapour floating in the air. Here is something kindred to the change of that which is material into that which is spiritual, and, perhaps, the change of which the text speaks is of this kind or of this class. Or take, say, a grain of wheat and drop it into the ground; it germinates; and presently it comes up to a beauteous blade. How much more like the spiritual is that green spiritual blade, than the hard, cold, apparently lifeless thing called a seed which you cast into the ground? "Flesh and blood," we are told, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Of these qualities we may mention strength. How little, in certain aspects, the body can bear! Compared with the spirits of some men how weak is the body. God Himself is clothed with activity, is ceaselessly active. Those who are redeemed to God by Jesus Christ are saved from morbid inactivity. There is as strong a desire to do, as there is to be and to enjoy. Now, to have a body that will endure this doing, because constituted of a material that will never wear, and that will never waste! Oh, how glorious will this be! (1) The transformation, so far as the substance is concerned, will be from a wasting material to a permanent substance. We all know that our bodies are now constituted on the principle of waste and repair. The future body will not be based on this arrangement. (2) The transformation will be from a corruptible substance to an incorruptible—from a substance exposed to many ills, to a substance the heir only to vigour and to pleasure. 2. The change in the form may be gathered from Rev. i. 13. The transformation will be from the mixture of comeliness and uncomeliness to perfect purity—from heaviness to lightness and agility—from dwarfishness or overgrowth to perfect stature—from the expression which sin and sorrow give to the human countenance unto the expression of perfect righteousness and of fulness of joy. Now all this is involved in the words, "fashioned like unto His glorious body." The body of the Lord Jesus Christ is a body that His Father thinks worthy of Him. It is a body suited to His dignity as King of kings, to the glorious city over which He reigns, and which harmonizes with all that is sublime and beauteous there. And when our bodies shall be fashioned like it what a change this will be; like that between the colours on a painter's palette, and the picture on the canvas, yet not like because infinitely surpassing it, or as the change which passes over the earth, when the winter is gone and the time of the singing of birds is come. II. JESUS CHRIST WILL BE THE TRANSFORMER. The Redeemer has taken us men entirely in hand to do everything for us. We want a sacrifice, a righteous standing with God, regeneration, teaching, comfort in tribulation, victory in battle, and He provides them all. In the text Christ is doing our part of His work for us. He has already transformed our spirits, and will in due time change our bodies. The tendency of this working is to subdue everything to His purpose, so that all things may have

this one issue—the working out of a complete salvation. The text exhibits—1. The resources of Christ. He literally can do everything for you. Inwardly you are His workmanship, for you are newly-created in Him; but more still will be done, even the transformation. Will you not, then, look more constantly to Christ? You cannot look to Him too much. He delights in your cherishing large expectations. 2. The completeness of redemption. Christ takes the body into His redeeming hand, He changes that, and He makes that perfect. Why not trust Him to perfect all that concerneth you? 3. The future glory of the saints. What is there involving dignity, or pleasure, or joy, that is not provided for in that Father's house to which the Saviour has gone that He may prepare a place for us. 4. One great object of the Christian's hope. The existence of hope in our nature is an illustration of the goodness of God. We double our sorrows by our fears. But what shall we say of the effect upon our joys of hope? We enjoy some promised or coming blessing, over, and over, and over again, long before it reaches our hands. Weary in this pilgrimage of life, whither are the weary steps which you are taking to-day carrying you? Every step carries you nearer home. Every pain tells that the hour is near in which the Lord Jesus Christ "shall change the body of your humiliation." Wait a little, and your redemption will be consummated, and it will be as though you had never known a fallen world like this, and a humbled nature like this. (*S. Martin.*) *The redemption of the body:—*

I. THE SUBJECT OF THE PROCESS. In our present fallen state the bodies, even of the saints, exhibit marks of degradation, and furnish the causes by which that degradation is manifested. 1. Our bodies, as they were created, so are they now supported, by nutriment derived from the earth on which we tread. 2. They are liable to be painfully affected by various elements and agencies of physical nature. 3. They are subject to manifold injuries, and sufferings, and diseases. 4. They are ultimately destined to return to the dust from whence they were taken. 5. On these accounts, and with a tacit comparison of what the body is with what it was, with what it would have been, if sin had not marred it—and with what it shall be—that the apostle terms it the body of our humiliation, but too sadly in keeping with the fallen and degraded soul, till renewed by the grace of the Almighty Spirit. *II. THE PROCESS.* 1. Not an absolute change, but a transformation and modification. This pre-supposes and implies the doctrine of the resurrection. 2. The model, according to which this change is accomplished, is nothing less than the glorified humanity of Christ. *III. THE AGENCY.* Surely He who made that which was not can make that which has been to be again. And, therefore, the text refers us to the Omnipotence of God. So wondrous a change is only explicable on the hypothesis of miracle. *IV. THE LESSONS.* The doctrine is—1. Highly illustrative of the glory of the Divine attributes. (1) How glorious will be that wisdom, which, through all the mutations of time shall keep its eye upon those integral and ultimate parts of the human body, which are essential to its identity, through all their various transitions, and which will collect those scattered particles and re-combine them into a beauteous frame. (2) How glorious that power which will accomplish that purpose. (3) How glorious that justice which will sooner or later render to every man in his body according to what he hath done. (4) How glorious that mercy which first makes men saints and constitutes them citizens of heaven, and finally admits them to the city of which they are made free by grace. 2. Calls upon us to remember and recognize with devout gratitude our special obligation to the Christian revelation, which brings this "life" and this "immortality," not only of the spirit but of the body, "to light." 3. Furnishes a powerful motive to submission when we are called upon to suffer bodily infirmity. 4. Affords an antidote against the tormenting fear of death for ourselves in ordinary life, and in the common process of human decay and mortality, as well as a strong consolation on the occasion of the removal of our beloved friends from time to eternity. 5. Shows us the fitness and propriety of that decent and reverential respect, which in Christian lands is ordinarily paid to the interment even of the mortal remains of departed and glorified friends? 6. Ought to convince us of the necessity of glorifying God with our bodies as well as our spirits. (*Jabez Bunting, D.D.*) *The resurrection of the body:—*1. *OUR SINFUL CONDITION.* Our body is a humble one. 1. Because of its sin, which brought all evil into the world. 2. Because of the immense labour that is necessary to supply its wants, abridging the time for intellectual and religious pursuits, and that only to feed that which will die. 3. As a hindrance to the richest feelings of which the heart is capable. 4. As doomed to die, and to inflict the keenest pain on beloved survivors. *II. THE GLORIOUS*

SCENE WHICH IS PECULIAR TO CHRISTIANITY. 1. The fact of the resurrection. This identical body shall rise. We cannot say in what that identity consists. The body often changes its substance, but its identity abides. If only a similar body there were no resurrection, only a new creation. We depend, however, on scriptural proof. (1) The resurrection of Christ. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." (2) The extent of redemption, which includes the body. "Ye are not your own," &c. "We wait for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body." Christ cannot lose His own. (3) Both body and soul have sinned or wrought righteousness, hence both body and soul must be rewarded or punished. (4) The application of the term "sleep" to death—which cannot refer to the soul; hence, death is the body collecting new vigour for the morning of the resurrection. (5) The great designation of Christ. "He must reign . . . the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." 2. At the resurrection there shall be a transformation of the bodies of the saints. What does it imply. (1) That there shall be no more death, Christ dieth no more, nor His. (2) Conformity to the body of Christ means no more deformity. Deformity in the countenance is sometimes the effect of sin, sometimes of accident: but there will be no more of either. (3) Excessive care, necessary for the support of the body, shall then exist no more. (4) The body will no more be a hindrance, but an assistant to the operations of the spirit. **III. THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS IS TO BE EFFECTED.** Doubtless the apostle introduced this to answer all objections. The whole is a miracle, but God makes miracles as great every day. (*R. Watson.*) *The body as it is and as it is to be:—***I. THE BODY AS IT IS.** 1. In regard to its dignity. (1) For this we must go back to its creation. (a) It is represented as a mass of unorganized matter. (b) Then it became an organized body. (c) After that breath is infused into it and it became an animated substance. The latter element imparts to the human system surpassing worth. (2) Dignity is imparted to the body in the process of redemption. (a) It has become a sanctified thing through the incarnation. Christ could touch nothing that He did not ennoble. (b) It has a dignity arising from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. (c) There are direct intimations that the body stands in a certain relation to mediatorial designs and purposes, and that Christ requires it for the advancement of His kingdom. "Glorify God in your body;" "Present your bodies a living sacrifice;" "The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." For most of its operations the mind requires the assistance of the body, and anatomists say that the very structure of our frames is such as pre-supposes their being used for the carrying out of mental objects and inventions. But the body was intended of God to be the handmaid in higher departments, to be the servant of the renewed will, and the will of the true disciple moves only in obedience to the will of his Master. So Christ speaks through His servant's mouth, works through his hands, controls his eye and ear lest they run after vanity, lifts up the feet on their mission of mercy and love. (3) All this shows why the apostle insists not only that we should have "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," but also that we should have "our bodies washed with pure water," for in baptism the body is made a consecrated thing. 2. In regard to its humiliation. It is humbled—(1) On account of our moral degeneracy and the curse entailed thereby. Every pain, disease, mark of old age, grave, remind us of this. (2) Because it is the seat of sin. Hence the expression "body of this death," and the necessity of keeping the body under. (3) In consequence of the labour and pain required to provide for its wants. (4) In that it is a hindrance to the soul's powers. **II. THE BODY AS IT IS TO BE.** The apostle uses the word "transfigure," perhaps, with a designed reference to the glorious splendours of the Mount of Transfiguration. **III. PRACTICAL RESULTS.** 1. The essential, inalienable sanctity of the body as a member of Christ and a temple of His spirit. 2. The folly and sin of undue carefulness in regard to bodily necessities. 3. The needlessness of the fear of death. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The power of Christ illustrated by the resurrection:—*The whole of our life is interwoven with the life of Christ. His first coming has been to us salvation. We live still because He lives. The completion of our salvation in the deliverance of our body from the bondage of corruption is wrapped up in His personal resurrection and quickening power. **I. THE MARVEL WHICH IS TO BE WROUGHT BY OUR LORD AT HIS COMING.** 1. He will change the body in which our humiliation is manifested and enclosed, and will transform it until it is like the body in which He enjoys and reveals His glory. Three times human eyes have seen something of the body of glory—in the face of Moses, after his forty days' communion; in the transfiguration of Christ; in the

angel face of Stephen. 2. Turning to 1 Cor. xv. we learn—(1) That the body is corruptible, subject to decay; but the new body shall be incorruptible. For the immortal spirit it shall be the immortal companion. (2) It is sown in weakness, weak to perform our will, weaker still to perform God's, weak to do and to suffer; but it is to be raised in power and be made like unto the angels who excel in strength. (3) It is a natural or soulish body—a body fit for the soul, for the lowest faculties of our mental nature; but it will be raised a spiritual body, adapted to the noblest portion of our nature, suitable for the highest aspirations of perfected humanity. (4) It is sinful, its members have been instruments of unrighteousness. It is true it is the temple of the Holy Ghost, but there are traces about it of the time when it was a den of thieves. But it awaits the time when it shall be perfectly sinless. (5) Being sinless it shall be painless. Truly, we who are in this tabernacle do groan. Up yonder the rod shall no longer chasten, the faultiness being removed. (6) The spiritual body will not need to sleep, for it will serve God day and night in His temple without weariness. (7) It will be perfect. If the saints have lost a sense or a limb or are halt or maimed they will not be so in heaven, for as to body and soul "they are without fault before the throne of God." "We shall be like Him," therefore beautiful. 3. The miracle will be amazing if you view it as occurring to those who shall be alive when Christ comes. Reflect, however, that most will be in their graves, and of many all trace will have disappeared. 4. By what possibility then can the self-same bodies be raised? I answer, it needs a miracle to make any of these dry bones live, and a miracle being granted impossibility vanishes. He who formed each atom from nothing can gather each particle from confusion. II. THIS POWER WHICH IS TO RAISE THE DEAD IS RESIDENT IN CHRIST AT THIS MOMENT. It is not some new power which Christ will take in the latter days. 1. This power is ascribed to Christ as the Saviour, and it is precisely in that capacity that we need the exercise of His power at this moment. How large, then, may be our expectations for the conversion of men. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. If as Saviour He will wake the dead, He can now quicken the spiritually dead. Your own regeneration was as remarkable an instance of Divine power as the resurrection will be. 2. Opposition may be expected to this power, but that resistance will be overcome. There will be no resistance to the resurrection, but to the spiritual there is prejudice, hatred of Christ, sinful preferences, &c. But "He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." 3. The text includes all supposable cases. Not here and there one, but all things. No man is so fallen but Jesus can save him. 4. Nothing is said concerning the unfitness of the means. The text obliterates man altogether. Jesus can and will do it all. 5. The ability is present with the Saviour. He is as strong now as He ever will be, for He changes not. 6. The text suggests a parallel between the resurrection and the subduing of all things. (1) All men are dead in sin, but He can raise them; many corrupt with vice, but He can transform them; some lost to hope as though their bodies were scattered to the winds—but He who raises the dead of all sorts can raise sinners of all sorts by the self-same power. (2) As the dead are to be made like unto Christ, so the wicked when converted are made like Him. Brilliant examples of virtue shall be found in those who were terrible instances of vice. III. THE WORK WHICH WE DESIRE TO SEE ACCOMPLISHED. The Saviour subduing souls, not to our way of thinking, to our Church, to the honour of our powers of persuasion, but "unto Himself." 1. This subjection is eminently desirable since it consists in transformation. 2. To be subjected to Christ is to be fitted for heaven. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *The raiser of the dead*:—St. Paul had been speaking of some whose interests were centred in earthly things. Of them he says that their end is destruction, &c. And in contrast with this way of passing life he describes the life of Christ's true servants. Their citizenship is in heaven. They are in the position of emigrants for whom the friendly government of a colony should provide, before their arrival at their destined country, a home and a rest. Heaven, then, as being already their country, naturally occupies a first place in their thoughts; but they cannot set foot in it until a great change has passed over them. It is upon this change, and upon the person of Him who is to effect it, that their eyes are naturally and constantly fixed while the present scene lasts. I. THE NATURE OF THE CHANGE referred to. 1. The human body in its present stage of existence. "Our body of humiliation." The human frame appeared to the Greek artist the most beautiful thing in nature. It was the form which seemed to the Greeks most nearly to unveil the Divine beauty to the eye of sense. How impossible to imagine the phrase of the apostle upon the lips of the men who decorated the Parthenon! It implies that the man who uses it has seen deeper and higher than

the realm of sense. The Greek knew only this visible world, and he made the most of it. The Hebrew had had a revelation of a higher beauty; and when men have come into contact with the Eternal, they sit lightly to the things of time. The Greek was occupied with the matchless outline of the human form. The Hebrew could not forget that his bodily eye rested after all on a perishable mass of animated clay (Isa. xl. 6-7; Psa. xc. 5-6; Job xiv. 1-2; James iv. 14). 2. Not that the phrase implies any one-sided depreciation of the body such as we meet with in heathen ascetics. Christianity on this subject keeps strictly a middle way between two opposite errors. On the one hand, the body has seemed to some to be man's all in all, just as it has to some of our modern materialists; and then it has been supposed that life either ceased altogether with death, or was, after death, so attenuated down into a purely shadowy existence as to lose all the importance which belongs to reality. And, on the other hand, the body has been treated as a mere incumbrance, having no true inherent relation to the complete life of man—the soul's prison-house—the degrading fetter which binds noble spirits down to the soil of earth—the mere instrument of a being who is complete without it, and who is never free, never himself, till he is delivered from it. And the effect, the moral effect, of the first of these opinions is certainly, upon the whole, to encourage unbounded sensual indulgence, and, of the second, to encourage suicide, since, if the alliance between soul and body is so disadvantageous and so unnatural, the sooner it is put an end to the better. 3. Between these opposite exaggerations revelation holds on a middle course. Death is the disturbance of that union of soul and body which constitutes man; and this irregular interruption of the true life of man ends at the resurrection, when man re-enters upon the normal conditions of his complete being. 4. And yet, masterful as the body is, it is not the governing element in human nature. Man is something higher, nobler, than the animal form with which he is so intimately identified. Man lives on the frontier of two vast mysterious worlds—the world of pure spirit and the world of animal existence. Our nature as a whole, has been ennobled as well as invigorated by the Son of God. He has taken body and soul alike, and joined it by an indissoluble union to His own eternal person. His body exists at the right hand of God, and thereby it confers a patent of nobility of which our race can never be deprived. And yet, while this life lasts, how great is the interval between our condition and His! How unlike to ours is the body of glory which rose from the tomb in its indescribable beauty, in its freedom of movement, in its inaccessibility to decay, in its spirituality of texture! 5. "His glorious body!" Christ's greatest gift is yet to come. We shall die as do the creatures around us; whether by violence or by slow decay. But He will gather up what death has left, and will transfigure it with the splendours of a new life (1 Cor. xv. 42-44). II. THE GROUND OF THE GREAT CHRISTIAN EXPECTATION OF A GLORIFIED BODY IN A FUTURE LIFE. How shall we get it? "According to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." 1. Everything of course depends on that. St. Paul had no doubt that Jesus Christ, crucified some thirty years before, was living and reigning and had actual jurisdiction over all things in heaven and earth. 2. It seems very strange to many that the elements of the human frame resolved into dust many centuries ago should be re-collected and endowed with a new and more glorious life. What has become of the particles; they have passed through animals and vegetables, and by this time are scattered in a thousand directions. How are they to be rescued from this oft-repeated appropriation. It is an astonishing exertion of superhuman power which is under consideration, but it is not more than any reasonable believer in God would assent to upon sufficient evidence of His declared will. No man can believe in God, without believing in an act of power, compared with which the resurrection of the dead is a trivial incident. To believe in God is to believe in the original creation of all things out of nothing, and creation is, after all, the great miracle. And the man who believes it will not question God's Word merely because the results to which it is pledged are what we call miraculous. By the very act of believing in God he believes in an initial miracle, compared with which all that can possibly follow is insignificant. III. SUCH A FAITH AS THIS IN THE RESURRECTION MUST HAVE GREAT CONSEQUENCES. 1. If we parted company with the body at death for good and all, it would not matter much what was done with this perishing husk. But if this body of humiliation has before it a splendid destiny, then we shall treat it in life and in death as princes are treated who live in expectation of a throne—with all the care and honour that its prospects demand. And hence, after death, respect for the human body is a natural result of Christian belief in the resurrection. Just as the

body of the Lord Jesus was carefully wrapped in fine linen and laid in a tomb until the morn of Easter, so, ever since, the bodies of departed Christian believers have been looked upon with eyes conveying something of the faith, something of the love, of Nicodemus and Joseph. We know that they, too, will rise. We know that we are not handling a lump of decaying matter which has lost its interest for ever, and which will presently be resolved into its chemical constituents to be recombined no more. It lies before us, there in very truth, a body of humiliation. But one day—we are certain of it—it is to be fashioned like the glorious body of the ascended Son of God, and we treat it accordingly. 2. Much more important is our duty to the body during life. (1) Guard it. You who are well off do what you can for the bodies of the poor. They, too, will rise. Let us all keep our bodies in temperance and chastity, from all that would bar entrance to the presence of Christ. Every man that hath the resurrection hope in him purifieth himself as Christ is pure. Do not forget how this sinful body may even here be made clean by Christ's body, just as the soul may be washed with His most precious blood. (2) Train it, not as a mere beautiful human frame, but as a future partaker in those scenes of transcendent joy and worship which are described in the Apocalypse. "Present your bodies," says the apostle, "a living sacrifice"—in works certainly, and in that best of all kinds of work—in worship. Worship, including bodily reverence, as well as spiritual communion, is a direct preparation for heaven. The body, which never bends here before the Being of beings, is not likely to be joined to a spirit that has really learnt to hold communion with the Holy and the Infinite. In such matters as this Christian instinct is far better than argument. When eternity is once treated by a man as a practical reality, he is likely very soon to make up his mind how to bear himself among the things of time. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The body of our humiliation* :—Clothe that body in purple and fine linen; array it in royal robes; deck it with a kingly diadem; place it on a throne; give it the sceptre of dominion; let nations bow at his feet—it is "a vile body;" and Herod, while all the crowd were calling him a god, felt that he was one of the vilest of men. Animate that body with genius; light up that countenance with a flow of lofty spirit; let an intellectual nature beam out from those eyes; let deep thought work beneath that brow, and a towering spirit move those muscles—still the body is "vile;" and in the midst of the astonishing lucubrations of the in-dwelling spirit, it may sink into the loathsomeness of corruption. Nay, what is better, adorn the in-dwelling spirit with power; let the soul be redeemed and regenerated and sanctified and impressed with God's image; let a soul born for glory look out through that face; let that body be the charge of angelic guardians; let that body be the temple of the Holy Ghost; let that body be sacred; let that body be associated with all that is estimable in the human character, with all that is dear and tender in social life; let that body attract wherever it moves—it is "a vile body," liable to fall in a moment. It may be seized with the pangs of anguish, and in an instant be deprived of its indwelling spirit and left to loathsomeness and corruption. "A vile body." We have all vile bodies—bodies of humiliation. Pride was not made for man—that is clear: pride will not do for man: "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble." (*T. Lessey.*) *God made nothing vile* :—When Archbishop Whately was dying his chaplain read to him, among other scriptures, the words before us, but with his wonted clearness the great man interrupted the reader, saying, "No; the body of our humiliation, not our vile body God made nothing vile." (*Canon Miller.*) *The present glory and humiliation of the body* :—If you take man's body in some of its aspects it is a noble thing. Surely there are marks of design upon it which speak of its Divine origin. Consider the marvellous mechanism of respiration and the circulation of the blood. Trace that network of arteries and veins. Note how the eye and the hand have been singled out as leading to the conclusion of the existence of a God. Mark every joint and every limb. Take our physical nature as you see it in its fair beauty in slumbering infancy. Look at the maiden in the first blush of her beauty or the matron in that beauty's maturity, and then tell me if the body is not a beautiful thing; whether the contemplation of its outward aspect or its interior mechanism be not a study for our wonder and admiration. But we turn to the other side and hear Paul speaking of it as a mere tent, which is to be taken down, and we turn to the last passage of the preacher of the Old Testament, and there we have a wonderful description so exquisite with its imagery and poetry of the day, "when the keepers of the house shall tremble," &c., which sets forth the sinking and failing powers of old age. But if we want to see the humbling side of this body of ours we must listen to Abraham whose wife's beauty had once

been so great. She was so fair a woman that he was induced to lie for her, and yet a few years later from the same Abraham comes the piteous appeal, "Give me a burying place that I may bury my dead out of my sight"—the same fair, beloved Sarah. And in order, further, that we may see that this body is indeed a body of humiliation, listen to those words which go home to our hearts as we read them—"Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." (*Ibid.*) *The resurrection body changed*:—And so paper—that article so useful in human life, that repository of all the arts and sciences, that minister of all governments, that broker in all trade and commerce, that second memory of the human mind, that stable pillar of an immortal name—takes its origin from vile rags! The rag-dealer trudges on foot or drives his cart through the towns and villages, and his arrival is the signal for searching every corner and gathering every old and useless shred. These he takes to the mill, and there they are picked, washed, mashed, shaped, and sized—in short, formed into a fabric beautiful enough to venture unabashed even into the presence of monarchs and princes. This reminds me of the resurrection of my mortal body. When deserted by the soul, I know not what better the body is than a worn and rejected rag. Accordingly, it is buried in the earth, and there gnawed by worms and reduced to dust and ashes. If, however, man's art and device can produce so pure and white a fabric as paper from filthy rags, what should hinder God by His mighty power to raise this vile body of mine from the grave, and refine and fashion it like unto the glorious body of the Lord Jesus Christ? (*Gothhold.*)

CHAPTER IV.

Vers. 1-8. Therefore—my brethren—dearly beloved.—Notice—I. THE GENERAL EXHORTATION (ver. 1). 1. Remark the kindness with which the apostle insinuates himself into the hearts of the Philippians; addressing them as "brethren," an appellation sacred in the Church as signifying that holy and Divine union which links its members in one common bond. And as though the word insufficiently expressed his affection, he adds "dearly beloved," and "longed for," and "my dearly beloved." This was not mere professionalism, least of all guilefulness. There was more love in Paul's heart than in his mouth, and of this he had given the Philippians proof. Herein is a model for ministers. Love is the only weapon by which good pastors ensure obedience. Force and threats will only make hypocrites. 2. These words express the affection of the apostle, but the following the piety of the Philippians. (1) As Paul found happiness only in the kingdom of Jesus, to say that the Philippians were his joy was to bear witness that Jesus reigned amongst them. Their spiritual condition was Paul's comfort in sorrow. (2) They were also his crown, the subject of his honour and ornament, as we say of a child or a scholar "he does honour" to his father or master. Their virtue proved how excellent must be the ministry of which they were the fruits. And then there was the prospect of the judgment, when the Lord would reward him with these Philippians and crown him therewith as with a precious jewel (chap. ii. 16; 2 Cor. i. 14; 1 Thess. ii. 19-20). From which it may be seen—(a) That a minister's ambition should be not to rule and to abound in riches and worldly pomp, but rather that holiness may abound in their flocks. (b) That the first and highest acknowledgment that flocks owe to their pastors is to hold them in honour. 3. Having won their hearts Paul exhorts them to steadfastness, i.e., perseverance in the gospel (Rom. v. 2, xiv. 4; Gal. v. 1). "So stand" may be regarded as referring—(1) To his teaching as to self-renunciation and justification through Christ; or—(2) to the necessity of resisting false teachers and realizing their heavenly citizenship. **II. THE PARTICULAR EXHORTATION TO EUODIAS AND SYNTYCHE.** These persons are nowhere else mentioned, but must have been of considerable influence in Philippi. They had, too, been fellow labourers with the apostle; but most probably had been led astray by the false teachers or were in danger of it. Mere domestic difference would hardly have called for such an interference. Note then—1. That the most exalted and excellent among believers are not always exempt from the trials and importunities of error. As snails will soil the brightest flowers, so Satan and his ministers will endeavour to spread the filthiness of their errors and extravagances in the purest and most esteemed minds. Since we are in a common danger let us

be on our guard. 2. That Christian women, should apply this to themselves. It was to Eve that Satan addressed himself in Paradise (1 Tim. ii. 14). The success of his first stratagem is Satan's subsequent encouragement to attack the same sex (2 Tim. iii. 6-7). Christian women, as he has more especially endeavoured to seduce you, be more resolute in your resistance of him. 3. While the example of Euodias and Syntyche may be useful to women, that of Paul may be profitable to pastors. He addresses personally those who have need of reproof (Acts xx. 31), and breaks the thread of a discourse addressed to the Church to do so. But observe his gentleness. How far beneath this model is the pride of those who boast of being his successors, and yet think it too great a condescension to speak to women, much less entreat them. 4. Our perseverance and union are to be "in the Lord." This is the band of true concord. To agree out of this is conspiracy.

III. THE RECOMMENDATION OF THESE WOMEN TO THE CARE OF OTHERS. Who the "yokefellow" was it is difficult to conjecture. Some say Paul's wife, others Epaphroditus (chap. ii. 25), or the husband of Euodias or Syntyche. Most probably he was a person of some merit and consideration in the Church. This should teach us—1. To distinguish between those who err ignorantly or negligently and those who err wilfully. The former are to be "helped." 2. These women's merits were that they laboured with the apostle and were worthy of help. 3. This help was to be rendered not by the "yokefellow" only, but by the whole Church, whose names were in "the book of life" (Rev. iii. 5, xx. 12; Dan. xii. 1; Luke x. 20; Ezek. xiii. 9). (*J. Dailé.*)

Unity of service at Philippi.—I. LOVE. "Beloved and longed for" is not a mere hurried phrase, or a gush of exuberant feeling that quickly dries up. There are rivers which dip down and flow underground, and then come out again into the light. So Paul's love, always flowing though sometimes unseen here sparkles in the sunshine. This love was grounded—1. In a common discipleship of the same Master. To love the same Saviour opens a new fountain of love in our hearts. As men are drawn to Christ, they are drawn closer to each other. 2. In the fact that they were the fruit of his ministry. They were the "joy" of his soul-travail and the "crown" of his labour. Of all bonds this is the closest. Are ye not wise enough to win souls and be a joy and a crown to one another? II. STEADFASTNESS. To do the right thing is good, but to stand fast in it is better. 1. Men get hindered and move away from the hope of the gospel. 2. It is a grand thing to stand fast to what is good and true in this changeable world (John viii. 31; Matt. x. 22). 3. Some stand fast in their Churchmanship, Presbyterianism, Methodism, Independency; but we may stand fast in these outside things without being "in the Lord." That is the only standing fast worth anything. Stand fast in Him, and He will stand fast by you. III. UNITY. Euodias and Syntyche had disagreed, and were exhorted to be of the same "mind." 1. Not of the same opinion, Paul knew too much of human nature to expect that. 2. The word has reference to the disposition rather than to the intellect. There is a way of holding truth in love to those who differ from us, and in the midst of differing creeds to be of the "same mind." The apostle appeals to both in the same way, so as to leave no suspicion of favouritism. O that all the wrangling Euodiases and contentious Syntyches would hear this admonition. High Church Euodias and Low Church Syntyche, Conforming Syntyche and Nonconforming Euodias say to one another as Abraham did to Lot, "Let there be no strife between me and thee." 3. The centre and circumference of this unity is "in the Lord." There is no real unity in creeds or formularies, in uniformity of discipline and worship. Every true Christian is united to Christ, and through Him each to the other. The world waits to believe until the disciples of Jesus are one. How long shall we keep them waiting? IV. MUTUAL SERVICE. Ver. 3 is full of work and workers. 1. There was the "true yokefellow." A yoke signifies hard work. Oxen are yoked together for work, and this person must have worked shoulder to shoulder with Paul. 2. There were the women who laboured with him in the gospel. These women had their "rights," glorious rights to labour in the gospel. Would there were more candidates for these honours. 3. Clement was no fine gentleman sitting at ease in Zion, doing nothing himself and finding fault with those who did work. That Church at Philippi was a hive of bees. No wonder they were so exemplary. They were too busy to be mischievous. Depend upon it God helped them all. 4. Think of the honour Paul assigned them—"Whose names are in the book of life." As the Jews of old kept a register of the living in their tribes and families from which the dead were blotted out, so God keeps a book of His living ones who will never die. Paul knew their names were there because of

their character. They were living ones, and were giving the best possible proof of life, viz., work. Dead people do not work. Love and help one another. Are our names in the book of life? If not read Rev. xx. 15. 5. It is the Lamb's book of life. The matter can only be dealt with at the Cross of Jesus. (*H. Quick.*) *Christian love*:—I. ITS SOURCE. 1. One brotherhood. 2. One hope. II. ITS INTENSITY.—1. Of affection. 2. Of desire. 3. Of esteem. III. ITS EXPRESSION. 1. Sincere in word and deed. 2. It seeks to promote—(1) Steadfastness. (2) Unity. (3) Mutual consideration. (4) Help. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) Dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord.—Observe—I. HOW CHRISTIANS LOVE ONE ANOTHER. 1. With sincere affection. 2. They delight in each other's company. 3. They rejoice in each other's happiness. 4. They promote each other's welfare. II. WHY THEY LOVE ONE ANOTHER. 1. They are brethren. 2. In the Lord. 3. They anticipate His blessing. (*Ibid.*) *Paul an example of ministerial solicitude and affection*:—"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." How singularly is this illustrated by the writer of these words, who only a few years before was "breathing out threatenings and slaughters against the Christians." I. THE PURPORT OF THESE ENDEARING TERMS. 1. Brethren, not kinsmen after the flesh, but spiritual relations. (1) In one sense he was their parent, as having begotten them in the gospel; but here in the spirit of unity and love he regards them as brethren. The appropriateness of the term is seen in the fact that believers are children of one heavenly Father, born of one Spirit, are made members of Christ of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, are heirs of the same inheritance. (2) Among these many brethren their Saviour is the firstborn, and while we are brought together as brethren in Him we are amply provided for; chastisement for error, counsel for guidance, comfort in sorrow, supply for every need. (3) Are the children of the Most High members of one another? Then there ought to be a sympathy for each other's concerns, an interest in each other's welfare, a holy zeal and rivalry in their Father's service. 2. Dearly beloved. (1) Love of the brethren is a distinguishing mark of those who have passed from death unto life. (2) A renewed soul who loves a brother because he is a brother will love all the brethren. (3) The more truly we love the Saviour the more truly shall we love one another; just as rays approach nearer themselves as they draw near their common centre. 3. Longed for. If we love Jesus we shall long for the spiritual welfare of His brethren, and yearn for communion with them. 4. My joy. Paul had many sources of happiness within: the Philippians were external sources of gladness. He had been the means of their conversion. They were rejoicing, and should he not share their joy? They were trophies of a Saviour's love, and that Saviour was dear to him. 5. My crown; and with good reason—"Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of my God." He trusted that they would own Him as their spiritual father when he and they should have the crown of righteousness. Every rescued soul is an ornament and honour to its rescuer. II. THE ADVICE WAS EQUAL IN IMPORTANCE TO THE TENDERNESS WITH WHICH IT WAS OFFERED—to "stand fast." 1. It implies that they had been admitted to that faith, hope, holiness, and blessedness in which they were to stand fast. 2. They were to stand fast not by themselves but in His might whose grace is made perfect in weakness. (1) By the indwelling of His grace. (2) By faith in His perfect work. (3) In love to Him who loved them. 3. This steadfastness is necessary to the very existence of ministerial comfort. "Now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord. 4. The honour of the Lord in a low and latitudinarian age demands it. 5. It is needful for the encouragement of weaker and younger brethren. (*R. P. Buddicom, M.A.*) *The bright side of a minister's life*:—A minister has many discouragements, disappointments and pains, as had Paul, but taking his work as a whole there is no profession that will bear comparison with it in bringing peace and joy. There is—I. THE JOY OF INTERESTING WORK. 1. His studies are interesting—his books and the literature of human life. 2. So is his practical work. His heart and hand are ever appealed to for sympathy and help. There are the bereaved to be comforted, fallen to be uplifted, young to be counselled, and a thousand charities to be practised in the name of Christ. A man entering the ministry with the right spirit will find perpetual exhilaration in the work. To enter the harvest-field where the grain is ripe, and the sheaves are coming towards the garner—that is life for the body, inspiration for the mind, rapture for the soul; and if there is an occupation that yields such mighty satisfaction in all the world I have never heard of it. II. THE JOY OF ELEVATED ASSOCIATIONS. If a man be tolerably acceptable in his work, the refine-

ments of society open before him. He is invited into the conclave of poets and artists; he is surrounded by kindly influences; society breathes upon him its most elevating advantages. Men in other occupations must depend on their wealth and achievements to obtain such position. By reason of the respect of men for the Christian minister, all these spheres open before him. In addition to that, and more than that, his constant associates are the princes of God and the heirs of heaven. III. THE JOY OF SEEING SOULS CONVERTED. To go from the house of God some Sabbath and feel that the sermon has fallen dead, and to be told the next day by some man, "That sermon was the redemption of my soul." I went home one Sabbath almost resolved never to preach again; the gospel seemed to have no effect; but before one week had passed I found that five souls, through the instrumentality of that poor sermon, had pressed into the kingdom of God. It is a joy like that of the angels of God over a repentant sinner to see men turning their backs on the world to follow Christ. IV. THE JOY OF COMFORT BEARING. To see the wounds healing; to see Christ come to the prow of the vessel and silence the Euroclydon; to see a soul rise up strengthened and comforted; to look over an audience, one-half of them in the habiliments of mourning, and yet feel that there is power in that gospel to silence every grief and soothe every wound of the soul—ah! to tell the broken-hearted people of the congregation that God pities, that God feels, that God loves, that God sympathizes—that is the joy of the Christian ministry! V. THE JOY OF THE CHURCH'S SYMPATHY. If the minister of Christ has been at all faithful in his work, he knows that there are those who are willing to sympathize in his every sorrow and in every success. He knows that he has their prayers and good wishes. If he be sick, he knows they are praying for his recovery. If dark shadows hover over his household, he knows there are those who are praying that those shadows may be lifted. (*T. de Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The pastors joy and crown*.—I. THE PASTOR'S JOY. His people's conversion—proficiency—unity—zeal. II. His crown. Because the fruit of his labour—the proof of his ministry—the pledge of his reward. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Stand fast*.—He reminds me of the death of that British hero, Wolfe, who on the heights of Quebec received a mortal wound. It was just at the moment when the enemy fled, and when he knew that they were running, a smile was on his face, and he cried, "Hold me up. Let not my brave soldiers see me drop. The day is ours. Oh, do keep it!" His sole anxiety was to make the victory sure. Thus warriors die, and thus Paul lived. His very soul seems to cry, "We have won the day. Oh, do keep it!" O my beloved hearers, I believe that many of you are "in the Lord," but I entreat you to "stand fast in the Lord." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The secret of steadfastness*.—Readers of Darwin will recall the description he gives of a marine plant which rises from a depth of one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet, and floats on the surface of the water in the midst of the great breakers of the Western Ocean. The stem of this plant is less than an inch through; yet it grows and thrives and holds its own against the fierce smittings and pressures of breakers which no masses of rock, however hard, could long withstand. What is the secret of this marvellous resistance and endurance? How can this little slender plant face the fury of the elements so successfully, and, in spite of storms and tempests, keep its hold, and perpetuate itself from century to century? The answer has leaped to every lip; it reaches down into the still depths, where it fixes its grasp, after the fashion of the instinct that has been put into it, to the naked rocks; and no commotion of the upper waters can shake it loose. (*S. S. Chronicle.*) *Steadfastness in the Lord* is enforced by—I. THE UNION BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE. 1. Legal. By His Father's appointment and His own love Jesus was so identified with those He came to save as to be treated not according to His own deserts but theirs, whilst they are so identified with Him as to be treated not according to their own deserts but His. This legal union is the fundamental blessing of the Christian salvation, all the others rest upon it. 2. Spiritual. This is the community of spiritual life—of thought, feeling, and enjoyment—existing between Christ and believers. This is produced by the Holy Spirit through that faith by which we enter the legal relation, or are justified—"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." 3. Manifest. The life of Christ will reveal itself in the graces which characterized Christ. Stand fast, then "in the Lord," because you are in the Lord. II. Christian steadfastness is further enforced by THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY. "Therefore," "so," point back to the previous statements. 1. The Christian is responsible for his privilege. He is a citizen of heaven and must maintain the dignity of his citizenship, and stand fast in it

against temptation and in trial. 2. The Christian is responsible for his hope. He expects a Saviour who will change the body of his humiliation. This expectation should give a deep sense of responsibility for our treatment of our body as an instrument of our moral nature. Dare we use the lips, which are to sing Christ's praises day and night, and the limbs which are to render unceasing service, as instruments of frivolity or vice? "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as He is pure." Holiness is the proper fruit of Christian hope, therefore stand fast. III. This injunction is enforced by THE MOST ENDEARING EPIETHETS. 1. Brotherhood in Christ. 2. Ardent love. 3. Joy and glorying in previous steadfastness. 4. The hope of rejoicing in it in the days of Christ. (R. Johnstone, LL.B.) *Christian steadfastness*:—With a heavenly birthright in possession and a glorious resurrection in prospect, the apostle naturally follows with this exhortation. 1. The highest relationship, "brethren"; 2. In the highest degree, "beloved"; 3. Exciting the purest emotion, "longed for"; 4. Resulting in the most glorious issues, "my joy and crown," are the motives by which the exhortation is enforced. I. OUR POSITION AS CHRISTIANS IS ONE OF POSSIBLE DANGER. 1. From the sceptical tendency of the age. 2. From the habits of society. The tradesman thinks he must do as others to get a living. The follies of fashion are followed to avoid singularity. 3. From indifference to the public ordinances of religion. The same rule applies to the Christian profession as to any other. Men do not prosper who neglect their calling. 4. From want of close attention to cultivation of personal piety. II. THE ONLY POSITION OF ABSOLUTE SAFETY IS UNION WITH CHRIST. 1. This condition is one of perfect alliance between the human and the Divine. Every string of the heart is in accord with the life of Jesus. Whether we think of the wisdom which is our light, the comfort which is our solace, the will which is our guide, or the purity which is our sanctification, its source is "in the Lord." 2. Those who stand on this spiritual eminence occupy an unshaken position among men. We stand fast with His power to defend us, His Spirit to uphold us, His character to guide us. III. A STATE OF WATCHFULNESS IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH HAPPINESS. The ocean is large enough for the biggest ships, but it is skirted with rocks. The lighthouse though itself a warning is the mariner's friend. (*Weekly Pulpit*.) *Christian stability*:—The exhortation, "stand fast," occurs six times; and still more frequently the duty is enjoined in equivalent terms. 1. The duty, therefore, is of primary importance. 2. There are two requisites—a foundation and strength. A man may have his foot upon a rock, yet if he be weak he cannot stand; and no matter how strong he may be, if his feet are on quicksand he cannot stand. I. THE GROUND TO STAND UPON. 1. The stable foundations are—(1) Truth. (2) Right principles. Truth is permanent, error is changeable, and therefore in every department, unless a man's views are correct, there is no security for his stability. But as our subject is Christian stability, the truth demanded is religious truth, the truth of the Bible. 2. The unstable foundations. (1) Traditions. Those of the Pharisees have passed away; those of the Church change from age to age. (2) Speculation results in philosophy, than which nothing is more unstable: e.g., the different schools of Greek philosophy, of the Middle Ages, of our own day, as Rationalism, Pantheism, Materialism, Atheism, and now Pessimism. (3) Feeling. Many believe in God; they believe in His mercy, but not in His justice, not in salvation by blood, not in depravity, &c. 3. The only stable foundation is the Bible; the firm conviction that it is God's Word and that what it teaches is infallibly true. The only ground of this faith, which is stable, is the witness of the Spirit. True experimental religion is the only security against error, and the only security for stability. 4. Right principles are necessary; not expediency, self-interest, or the interest of parties, but what is right. II. THE STRENGTH BY WHICH TO STAND. There is much difference naturally among men, but the strength needed is not our own. It is of the Lord. It is His and His gift. If we trust in ourselves we must fall. (C. Hodge, D.D.) *The watchword for to-day*, "Stand fast" (Text in connection with chap. iii. 20, 21):—Every doctrine has its practical bearing. Hence you find Paul full of "therefores"—conclusions drawn from statements of Divine truth. The Lord is coming to glorify His people; let us therefore keep our posts until the coming of the great Captain shall release the sentinels. I. Paul joyfully perceived that HIS BELOVED CONVERTS WERE IN THEIR RIGHT PLACE. It is important that we should begin well. The start is not everything, but it is a great deal. "Well begun is half done." We must enter the strait gate, and begin at the right point. Many slips and falls are due to not being right at first, a flaw in the foundation will make a crack in the superstructure. 1. The

only position in which we can begin aright is "in the Lord." It is a very good thing to be in the Church, but if you are not in the Lord first you are out of place. What is it to be "in the Lord"? (1) When we fly to Him by repentance and faith and make Him our refuge and hiding-place. Are you in Him? You can have no better hiding-place; in fact, there is no other. (2) When we are in Christ as to our daily life; whatever we eat or drink, doing all in His Name. (3) By a real vital union. In Him and in Him only is our spiritual life sustained, just as it can only be received from Him. (4) Christ has become our element, vital and all-surrounding. We are in Christ as birds are in the air which buoys them up and enables them to fly; as fish are in the sea. 2. Because they were in Christ, therefore—(1) They were Paul's brethren. Many of them were Gentiles whom Paul would once have regarded as dogs. But now as Christ was not ashamed to call them brethren, neither was Paul. (2) They were his dearly beloved, the repitition of which makes it mean "My doubly dear ones." (3) His longed-for—his most desired ones. He first desired to see them converted, then baptized, then exhibiting all the graces. He desired their company because they were in Christ. (4) His joy and crown. Paul had been the means of their salvation. The minister's highest joy is that the brands snatched by him from the burning are now living to the praise of the Lord Jesus. II. PAUL LONGED THAT THEY SHOULD KEEP THEIR PLACE. The beginning of religion is not the whole of it. Precious are the feelings which attend conversion, but dream not that repentance, faith, &c., are for a season and then all is done with. In conversion you have started in the race, and you must run to the end. In your confession of Christ you have carried your tools into the vineyard, but the day's work now begins. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." The difference between the spurious and the real Christian is this staying power. 1. Stand fast doctrinally. In this age all the ships are pulling up their anchors, drifting with the tide, driven about with every wind. It is your wisdom to put down these anchors. We will hearken to no teaching but that of the Lord Jesus. 2. Practically stand fast. The barriers are broken down; they would amalgamate Church and world: yes, even Church and stage, and combine God and devil in one service. "Come out from among them," &c. Strive together to maintain the purity of Christ's disciples. 3. Stand fast experimentally. Pray that your inward experience may be close adhesion to your Master. 4. Stand fast in the Lord without wishing for another trust. What way of salvation do we seek but that of grace? what security but the precious blood? 5. Stand fast without wavering. Permit no doubt to worry you. 6. Stand fast without wandering. Keep close to the example and spirit of your Master, and having done all to stand. 7. Stand fast without wearying. You are tired; take a little rest and brush up again. You cry, I cannot see results. Wait for them. Practice perseverance. 8. Stand fast without warping. Timber, when it is rather green, is apt to go this way or that. The spiritual weather is very bad just now for green wood: it is one day damp with superstition, and another parched with scepticism. III. PAUL URGED THE BEST MOTIVES FOR THEIR STANDING FAST. 1. Because of your citizenship (chap. iii. 20). Men ought to behave themselves according to their citizenship, and not dishonour their city. 2. Because of their outlook. Jesus is coming not as judge or destroyer, but as Saviour. Now if we look for Him we must stand fast. There must be no going into sin, no forsaking the fellowship of the Church, leaving the truth, playing fast and loose with godliness, running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. Let us so stand fast that when Jesus comes we may be able to say "Welcome." 3. Because of their expectation of being transformed into the likeness of Christ's glorious body. 4. Because of our resources. "According to the power," &c. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Christian love* :—When a rosebud is formed, if the soil is soft, and the sky is genial, it is not long before it bursts, for the life within is so abundant that it can no longer contain it all, but in blossomed brightness and swimming fragrance it must needs let forth its joy, and gladden all the air. And if, when thus ripe, it refused to expand, it would quickly rot at heart and die. And Christian love is just piety with its petals fully spread, developing itself and making it a happier world. The religion which fancies that it loves God, when it never evinces love for its brother, is not piety, but a poor mildewed theology, a dogma with a worm at the heart. (James Hamilton, D.D.) *Love the gauge of manhood* :—I do not distinguish men merely by the difference of their thought power, still less by the difference of their executive power, still less by their external differences, as when one is high, another low; one rich, another poor; one wise, another unwise. The point where true manhood resides is in the neighbourhood of love. In the copious-

ness, the variety, the endlessness, the sweetness, and the purity of the element of love, you shall find the measure that God applies, discriminating between one another. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The professional minister*:—The man who has adopted the Church as a profession as other men adopt the army, the navy, or the law, and goes through the routine of its duties with the coldness of a mere official—filled by him the pulpit seems filled by the ghostly form of a skeleton, that in its cold and bony fingers holds an unlit lamp. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Ministerial qualifications*:—The minister is to be a live man, a real man, a true man, a simple man, great in his love, great in his life, great in his work, great in his simplicity, great in his gentleness. (*J. Hall, D.D.*) Learn in Christ how possible it is to be strong and mild to blend in fullest harmony the perfection of all that is noble, lofty, generous in the soldier's ardour of heroic devotion; and of all that is calm, still, compassionate, tender in the priest waiting before God and mediation among men. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The minister's joy and crown*:—The "crown" here is not the diadem of royalty, but the garland of victory. He has in his mind, as so often, the famous public athletic games of the Greeks—which the diligent training, and the strenuous and persevering exertion, needed to gain the "corruptible crown" of laurel, and the intensity of joy felt by the victors, rendered an admirable illustration of the Christian life, whether as regards the spiritual progress of the believer himself or his work for the salvation of others. The apostle believed that he would be enabled to "rejoice in the day of Christ, that he had not run in vain," as a minister of Christ. In Nero's prison, aged, worn with trouble, manacled, uncertain whether he might not soon be led forth to death by the executioner, he knew himself to be yet in truth, as a successful minister of Christ, a conqueror wreathed with amaranth. The emperor in his palace was, in heart, weary and wretched. The prisoner was restful and happy. The glitter of the emperor's power and grandeur would very soon pass away and be as a dream. His prisoner was already invested with a glory which, recognized in this world only by those whose eyes had been opened to discern spiritual things, should yet be manifested before the universe—for "they that be wise shall shine," &c. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) *Stand fast*:—Stand fast, like the British squares in the olden times. When fierce assaults were made upon them every man seemed transformed to rock. We might have wandered from the ranks a little in more peaceful times, to look after the fascinating flowers which grow on every side of our march; but, now we know that the enemy surrounds us, we keep strictly to the line of march, and tolerate no roaming. The watchword of the host of God just now is—"Stand fast!" Hold you to the faith once delivered to the saints. I like that spirit of Bayard, that knight without fear and without reproach. In his last battle his spine was broken, and he said to those around him, "Place me up against a tree so that I may sit up and die with my face to the enemy." Yes, if our backs were broken, if we could no more bear the shield or use the sword, it would be incumbent upon us as citizens of the New Jerusalem, to die with our faces towards the enemy. I like that speech of Wellington, who was so calm amid the roar of Waterloo, when an officer sent word, "Tell the Commander-in-Chief that he must move me; I cannot hold my position any longer, my numbers are so thinned." "Tell him," said the great general, "he must hold his place. Every Englishman to-day must die where he stands, or else win the victory." The officer read the command to stand, and he did stand till the trumpet sounded victory. And so it is now. My brethren, we must die where we are rather than yield to the enemy. If Jesus tarries we must not desert our posts. Wellington knew that the heads of the Prussian columns would soon be visible, coming in to ensure the victory; and so by faith we can perceive the legions of our Lord approaching: in serried ranks His angels fly through the opening heaven. The air is teeming with them. I hear their silver trumpets. Behold, He cometh with clouds! When He cometh He will abundantly recompense all who stood fast amid the rage of battle. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 2. I beseech Euodias and I beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord.—*Euodias and Syntyche, or the troublesome tongue*:—1. Two women connected with the Church were at enmity. They were estimable women and active in Christian work; but they differed and scandal ensued. 2. The cause of the quarrel may have been—(1) Some important point of doctrine; (2) A trifling difference of opinion; or (3) Some slight act or careless word. The feminine nature was sensitive, offence was taken, disadvantageous things were whispered of each other; then it became a topic of common conversation, and two parties may

have been formed. 3. The apostle in his efforts to check the evil wisely abstained from entering into detail. He knew there were two sides to the question. Hence he entreats them to give up their dissention of their own accord from the love of Christ. Euodias "fragrance" and Syntyche "a talker," may have settled their differences; but they stand as permanent examples of the pettiness of mere bickering, and of the danger that arises from uncontrolled use of the tongue. A man or woman can make the whole of life burdensome to some one else by a malicious tongue. I. TAKE A FEW INSTANCES OF THE HARM DONE. 1. Socially. A woman may drop a word concerning a neighbour, hinting that she is extravagant or self-indulgent, and she is noticed, shunned, chilled, embittered. Or a workman can drop a hint concerning another whom he dislikes, suggesting that he "does not know his own," or that he is liable to get into much company, or that his work is flimsy, and the man may lose his place and his family their bread. 2. Domestically. Some little article is misplaced on a Sabbath morning, a sharp word is uttered and the family made miserable for the rest of the day. 3. Ecclesiastically. A trifling act or word has often split up a Church, and a slanderous hint whispered about a minister's doctrine or practice which ruins him for life. 4. Religiously. Perhaps the venom of slander is more intense here than anywhere. Under the appearance of anxiety for truth and justice what injury is often done! 5. Internationally. A little thing can kindle a blaze among the nations. A few words by a wanton statesman may start it. Europe is full of explosive materials and the peaceable ever live in danger of having to suffer. II. THERE IS A PERIOD WHEN A QUARREL CAN BE CHECKED, BUT WHEN ONCE STARTED WHO CAN SAY WHERE IT WILL END? In its earliest stages a fire can be quenched with a pint of water, but when it begins to spread who can set bounds to it? The sin of slander is like a maddened horse or a dry forest on fire. A thoughtless scandalous word goes from one to another gathering as it goes. A snowball rolled in snow gathers garbage and whatever may come in its way, becoming solid by rolling and lasting long after all other snow has melted. So when a gossiping tongue drops a hint a whole area of peace may be destroyed for long. III. THOSE WHO ARE SO KEEN TO DETECT EVIL IN OTHERS ARE OFTEN THEMSELVES THE MOST GUILTY. The most worthy are often selected as the objects of bitter attacks, just as we find the best fruit is that at which the birds have been pecking. IV. MOST SLANDER WOULD BE STARVED IF NO ONE FED IT, but so many are glad to hear of evil. There are those who seem to have no other business but to pick up and spread evil reports. They rejoice in a piece of scandal as a raven does in carrion. V. THE CARELESS TONGUE OFTEN PUNISHES THE POSSESSOR. The tongue may run away with us like a mad horse, and who shall drag us from the dangerous precipice (Prov. xiii. 13; xxi. 23). (F. Hastings.) *Private differences*:—I. OFTEN OCCUR. II. OCCASION MUCH EVIL. III. REQUIRE GENTLE INTERFERENCE. IV. ARE BEST SETTLED IN THE LORD. (J. Lyth, D.D.) *Love and strife*:—I. THE TRANSCENDENT IMPORTANCE OF THE GRACE OF LOVE. 1. It is the evidence of our standing fast in the Lord. God is love, and to be without love is to be without God. Serious differences among Christians display the lack of it. Where Christians are unanimous the Church is invincible; where divided the Church falls to pieces. 2. The law of love was laid down by Christ—"A new commandment give I unto you," &c. Complete attainment is perhaps scarcely attainable here; but a drop may be kindred to the ocean. 3. To the cultivation of this love the greatest importance is attached. "We know that we have passed from death unto life," &c. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," &c. The observers of the early disciples said, "How they love one another." II. THE DISSENTION BETWEEN EUODIAS AND SYNTYCHE. 1. Its ground is not mentioned. Perhaps it was something altogether frivolous, for even mature Christians act sometimes like silly children. Perhaps, however, seeing that they were both active they differed about the best modes of carrying on the Lord's work. When people are doing a great work enthusiasm often engenders impatience, and words are uttered that are regretted afterwards. 2. Whatever the ground of their dissention, their wise friend Paul had only one advice to give, "Be of the same mind." This did not mean "have the same views." "In the Lord" suggests remembrance of the important matters on which they were agreed—how utterly unsuited quarrelling or coldness was for those who were united "in the Lord." Christians should agree to differ, and follow out their separate views lovingly and with mutual helpfulness. As there were at first Peter, John, Thomas, Martha, Mary, so there ever will be. Let us imitate the tolerance and catholicity of Christ. 3. Mark the mode of Paul's interference. (1) He makes not the slightest reference to the cause of dissention.

In most cases reconciliation is more likely to be effected by letting the matter sleep and die. (2) From his apostleship and relations with the Philippians he might have been "much bold in Christ to enjoin them that which was convenient; yet for love's sake he rather beseeches them." (3) He beseeches them separately, and treats them with exactly the same consideration. (4) He calls in a common friend to help them to a reconciliation (ver. 3), a thoroughly discreet friend of both could do not a little to smooth the way. This is a form of delicate work, and is often shunned; yet none more likely to produce blessed results. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*)

Seek peace:—I. THE PEACE-BREAKERS—1. Have still their representatives. 2. Destroy their own happiness. 3. Disturb the Church. II. THE PEACEMAKERS. 1. Christ, who gives us one mind and heart. 2. His servants, who gently beseech and point to Him. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Disagreements of Christians:—Johnny Morton, a keen burgher, and Andrew Gebbie, a decided anti-burgher in the great Presbyterian controversy, both lived in the same house at opposite ends; and it was the bargain that each should keep his own side of the house well thatched. When the dispute about the principle of their kirks grew hot, and especially the offensive clause of the oath, the two neighbours ceased to speak to each other. But one day they happened to be on the roof at the same time, each repairing the slope on his own side, and when they had worked up to the top, there they were face to face. They couldn't flee: so at last Andrew took off his cap, and, scratching his head, said, "Johnny, you and me I think ha'e been very foolish to dispute as we ha'e done, concerning Christ's will about our kirks, until we had clean forgot His will about ourselves; and so we ha'e fought sae bitterly for what we ca' the truth, that it has ended in spite. Whatever's wrang, it's perfectly certain that it never can be right to be uncivil, unneighbourly, unkind, and in fac' tae hate ane anither. Na, na! that's the devil's work and no God's. Noo it strikes me, that may be it's wi' the kirk as wi' this house—ye're working on a'e side and me on t'ither; but if we only do our work weel we will meet at the tap at last. Gie's your han', auld neighbour!" And so they shook hands, and were the best of friends ever after. (*E. Foster.*)

What is needed by dissentients:—What two men want whose ill-temper and mutual distrust are daily becoming worse is a common friend whose hearty affection for both will utterly drive away their evil thoughts. There are people of that kind. Their face, their tone, their gestures, are all "conductors" of a mysterious but most Divine force that is not to be resisted. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*)

The method of peacemaking:—One sure way of peacemaking is to let the fire of contention alone. Neither fan it, nor stir it, nor add fuel to it, but let it go out of itself. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Union in Christ:—The union of Christians to Christ their common Head, and the means of the influence which they derive from Him, one to another, may be illustrated by the loadstone; it not only attracts the particles of iron to itself by the magnetic virtue, it unites them one among another. (*R. Cecil, M.A.*)

Strife among Christians ruinous:—Quickly following upon the battle of Chancellorsville, a cry was raised by the rearguard of Stuart's cavalry, "The enemy is upon us." Shots began to be fired in all directions, and the whole army was soon in a panic of fright. The First and Third Virginia Regiments, no longer recognizing each other, charged upon each other mutually: while Stuart's mounted men, generally so brave and so steadfast, no longer obeyed the orders of their officers, and galloped off in great disorder. When at last quiet was restored, the number of wounded was seen to be sadly numerous. (*M. O. Mackay.*)

Strife among Christians often the result of mistake:—During one of the wars between the English and French, two war-vessels met in fearful encounter. It was too dark to distinguish friends from foes; but each supposed itself engaged with the common enemy. When the darkness lifted, both ships were seen flying the English flag. They saluted each other, and grieved sadly over their disastrous mistake.

Ver. 8. I intreat thee also, true yokefellow.—*The faithful colleague*:—I. HIS CHARACTER. II. HIS WORK. III. HIS REWARD. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Lay help:—We have here a lively picture of lay help as it was in apostolic times. Of all the actors in this busy scene there is no proof that any one was "ordained." Who St. Paul's "yokefellow" was we know not. If Epaphroditus, there is nothing to show that he was in the ministry as we understand the term. As "apostle" (chap. ii. 25) of the Philippians he was simply a messenger, and the other expressions in the same verse do not imply office. There is nothing to prove that Clement was the illustrious bishop of Rome. He is only mentioned as one of Paul's many "fellow

labourers," whom it is quite gratuitous to confound with the bishops and deacons.

2. But the clear words of the text carry us a step further. Women are among the fellow toilers. And here, too, it would be a narrowing idea to suppose that they were deaconesses. It is simply as fellow Christians that they are fellow labourers.

3. There the particular help invited has nothing clerical in its nature. The original bids these friends join in the reconciliation of Euodia and Syntyche. The persons addressed, the persons described, and the help asked for, enforce to one duty, that of laymen consecrating themselves to Divine service. The idea that all the offices of piety and charity are to be heaped upon the clergy; that it is unnecessary and presumptuous for an unordained man to put his hand to the plough of Christian labour, is so directly opposed to every principle of the gospel, that it would have received St. Paul's heaviest condemnation. Christ has called us to a corporate life, a body having many members, each with its office, and all equally helpful and essential (Rom. xii. 4-5).

I. Note THE ADVANTAGES OF ASSOCIATION IN STIMULATING, DIRECTING, AND ECONOMIZING LABOUR. Multitudes of men and women stand idle in the Church's market-place and give as their excuse, "No man hath hired us." That excuse never, indeed, had any truth in it. Creation, Redemption, Conscience, the Gospel, the Spirit, are enough to silence the plea that God hath no call for us. But how many converted souls have asked themselves, a minister, or a friend, "What shall I do?" without meeting with a response. The principle of association meets this want, giving assurance of sympathy, direction, and help. Loneliness in feeling is melancholy, in working paralysis. United effort prevents superfluous labour upon a spot already cultivated, and directs it on neglected spheres.

II. THE VARIETY OF AGENCIES OFFERED TO THE CHRISTIAN WORKMAN. There is nothing too small to be reckoned, too secular to be consecrated when it has to do with Christ's Church, whether instruction of the young in Sunday or night-school, visiting the sick, joining the choir, or placing the worshippers in order and quietness, or bringing the Church by decorations into unison with the joys of Christmas, Easter, &c. All are not bidden to rush into one kind of service, but each is asked to do what is most suitable to his gifts heartily as unto Christ.

III. THE REWARD OF THE WORKER (Prov. xi. 25). There is a reaction of good, not least, upon him. It is a great thing to see for ourselves things of which we have idly read in books; want and sorrow so light in the abstract, so heavy in the enduring; to be shamed out of our luxury, loitering, listless, dreamy, self-indulgent intellectualism; to be enabled to see that in our little part of our day we are decidedly on the side of good, which is the side of Christ. (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Women in the Church:—

I. THEIR MINISTERS. 1. Prayer. 2. Sympathy. 3. Private effort. 4. Words of love.

II. THEIR CLAIMS. 1. To encouragement. 2. To protection. 3. To help. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

*Help the women:—*The service of women to the cause of truth has been invaluable in all ages. The old Testament is full of it, and the Christian Church has always been blest with it. Women ministered to the wants of the Saviour, succoured the apostles, and contributed to the spread of the gospel in many ways.

I. WOMEN NOBLY ENGAGED. By both nature and position, woman has facilities and opportunities for work that men do not possess.

1. In the work of teaching. In the home, in the Sunday School, and in the mission-hall, the services of pious women are conspicuous. Timothy was instructed in the Scriptures by his mother and his grandmother.

2. In works of benevolence. Charity is almost natural to woman. We read of Dorcas, who made garments for the poor.

3. In visiting the sick. Woman is the best visitor in the sick-room. Her tenderness, and often her helpfulness, prove her fitness for the work. The life of Elizabeth Fry could not be written of any man. Nightingale, the songstress of mercy at the head of the ambulance corps, was another, whose ministry helped forward the gospel.

4. Mission work abroad. The missionary's wife is the mother of the tribe among whom she labours. In many parts of the world—for example, in India—the seclusion to which all women are banished precludes access to them except by woman.

II. SUCH WORK MUST BE ENCOURAGED. Like all workers, they need the heart and hand of the Church to support them.

1. Help them by sympathy and tenderness. Let them see that they share our full confidence. A word of cheer is helpful to those toilers. St. Paul was careful to greet them, and to acknowledge their services.

2. Supply them with the means of doing good. They often want relief for the poor, which they cannot supply.

3. Pray for them.

4. Bear your share of their burden. Take upon you the heaviest end of the work. (*Weekly Pulpit.*)

*Fellow labourers:—*1. Sympathy was a strong characteristic of St. Paul, an instance of which is his fondness for the word

"fellowship." Fellow-heirs, citizens, prisoners, servants, soldiers, workers, labourers. 2. Fellowship was the first necessity of our creation. "It is not good for man to be alone." It is a high part of our religion, a preparation for the society, unity, and choruses of heaven. 3. Fellowship of labour stands in immediate connection with "the book of life." Are we then enrolled together as labourers? Will none be there who have not laboured? Is "the communion of saints" a communion of workers for God? Will it be so for ever in heaven? What an argument for the united labours in the Church? I. THE WHOLE GENIUS OF CHRISTIANITY IS WORK. "Go work." "Work while it is day." "Let men see your good works." The end of all work is the extension of the Kingdom of God. Christianity, unlike other religions, is essentially propagating. It is, therefore, compared to that which emits and cannot but emit; leaveu, light. The test of all at the last day will be what we have done. II. THIS IS A DIFFERENT CONCEPTION OF RELIGION TO THAT WHICH IS HELD BY MANY RELIGIOUS PEOPLE. There is a spiritual as well as a natural selfishness. It is not selfish to pray the prayers which are all for ourselves, to take an interest only in our own souls, to know the greatest of all happiness, and not impart it to others? III. IN THIS WORK MINISTERS AND PEOPLE MUST CO-OPERATE. All the commands to extend the kingdom of Christ are binding on clergy and laity alike. IV. THE SAFETY OF ANY ONE WHO IS NOT A LABOURER IN THE VINEYARD IS VERY DOUBTFUL. The condition of going into the vineyard was a wish to work. None are to simply go into the grounds, to pick flowers, to eat the fruit, but all to work. And the reckoning at the end was of the work done. V. IT IS A WONDERFUL ARRANGEMENT THAT GOD HAS COMMITTED THIS WORK TO SINNERS, not to the heavenly hosts. But our weakness is our strength; our sinfulness is our argument. For who can sympathize with sinners but a sinner? VI. NO ONE CAN UNDERTAKE THIS WORK WHO HAS NOT A LOVE FOR CHRIST AND SINNERS. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The book of life.*—I. ITS AUTHOR. II. ITS PUBLICATION: at the last day. III. ITS CONTENTS: the names of the faithful. IV. ITS EFFECT: life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Names in the Book.*—There is pathos in a human name, for it always represents a life, an experience, a history, a destiny. Sometimes in the Scriptures "names" mean souls (Acts i. 15). I. SOME OBSERVATIONS. 1. It is a great thing to have a name in the New Testament. Think of the roll-call in the sixteenth of Romans and the eleventh of Hebrews! 2. It is a great thing now to have a name in the family Bible; for that generally signifies Christian training and parental prayers. 3. It is a great thing to have a name upon the pages of a Church register. How affecting are these old manuals, with their lists of pious men and women, many of whom have passed into the skies! 4. It is the greatest thing of all to have a name in the Lamb's Book of Life. Beyond all fame (Matt. xi. 11). Beyond all power (Luke x. 20). II. SOME QUESTIONS. 1. In how many books is your name written now? 2. How can a human name be written securely in the Lamb's Book of Life? 3. To backsliders: Are you going to return to your name, or do you want it to come back to you? 4. To Christian workers: How many names have you helped to write in the Book of Life? 5. Is there any cheer in thinking how our names will sound when the "books are opened" in the white light of the throne? (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Names.*—I. WHOSE NAMES ARE WRITTEN THERE? Those of—1. The faithful labourer. 2. The patient sufferer. 3. The victorious combatant. 4. The despised saint. II. HOW THEY CAME TO BE WRITTEN THERE? 1. Through grace. 2. By the blood of Jesus. 3. The Spirit of God. III. WHY ARE THEY WRITTEN THERE? Because—1. Citizens of heaven. 2. Heirs of the promises. 3. Precious in the sight of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian co-operation.*—Union is power. The most attenuated thread when sufficiently multiplied will form the strongest cable. A single drop of water is a powerless thing, but an infinite number of drops united by the force of attraction will form a stream, and many streams combined will form a river, till rivers pour their water into the mighty ocean, whose proud waves, defying the power of man, none can stay but He who formed them. And thus for us, which, acting singly, are utterly impotent, are, when acting in combination, resistless. (*G. H. Slater.*) *Woman's work.*—A woman may labour with an apostle in the gospel, without departing one step from the propriety of her position, or the delicacy of her character; she can work a good work for Christ, and for the performance or neglect of it she must hereafter give account. By example, by influence, by meek endurance, by active sympathy, she can do all that a man cannot do, in the society of her equals, and in the homes of the suffering. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Woman's work.*—Women, you can give and serve and pray. You can give self-denyingly,

serve lovingly, pray conqueringly. The best examples of self-denying liberality, of loving service, of conquering prayer are recorded of woman. It was no great gift, service, prayer. The gift was a widow's mite. The service was the anointing of Jesus with a box of ointment. The prayer was a mother's prayer for a daughter possessed with a devil. But the gift and service and prayer were in self-denial and love and faith. And so in the sight of God they were of great price. (*H. Johnson.*) *Unknown workers*.—Who has not heard of John Wesley? Yet how few are acquainted with Peter Böhler, who brought him to Christ. (*J. F. B. Tinsling, B.A.*) *One woman's work*.—An American paper tells the story of a woman who, because tired of a life mainly employed in eating and dressing, resolved to devote herself and her money to a nobler purpose. At the close of the war she went to a sandy island off the Atlantic coast, where about two hundred persons were living in poverty and ignorance, and established her home there, with the intention of benefiting the inhabitants. She began with teaching, by example, how to cultivate the land lucratively, and was soon imitated. Next she established a school for the children, and afterwards a church. Now the island is a thriving region, with an industrious and moral population, the change being the work of one woman. (*Christian Age.*) *The early Christian women*.—"What women these Christians have!" exclaimed the heathen rhetorician Libanius, on learning about Anthusa, the mother of John Chrysostom, the famous "golden-mouthed" preacher of the gospel at Constantinople in the fourth century. Anthusa, at the early age of twenty, lost her husband, and thenceforward devoted herself wholly to the education of her son, refusing all offers of further marriage. Her intelligence and piety moulded the boy's character, and shaped the destiny of the man, who, in his subsequent position of eminence, never forgot what he owed to maternal influence. Hence, it would be no overstrained assertion to say that we owe those rich homilies of Chrysostom, of which interpreters of Scripture still make great use, to the mind and heart of Anthusa. (*W. Bazendale.*)

Vers. 4-8. Rejoice in the Lord alway.—*Three elements of Christian character*.—I. The keynote of the Epistle and of Christian life is CHEERFULNESS. The repetition here, and the enforcement of the same in other Epistles shows us the importance of this duty. 1. If the Philippians neglected or undervalued this duty they have many imitators to-day. Some professing Christians set their faces against it, and make the best of days the saddest, the best of books the most forbidding, and the best of services the least inviting. Those who take their cue from these, come to regard sourness and sanctity as synonymous. This is a gross and dishonouring perversion of that which was heralded with notes of joy. 2. It is "in the Lord" that we are to be glad. Christ has brought the materials out of which gladness is made—new and happier thoughts, power, purposes, hopes. 3. The advantages are manifold. (1) To ourselves. (a) Cheerfulness brings us within the charmed circle of the noblest and brightest spirits. Without this we can never enter into the rapture of psalmists and prophets. (b) The perception of cheerfulness nourishes the very cheerfulness it sees. The sun not only reveals and makes the beauty and fragrance of the flower. (2) To others. Nothing breaks down the opposition of men to Christianity like a bright cheering life. It more faithfully represents the true spirit of Christianity. Christ came to make the world glad, and only as we rejoice in and with Him are we true to Him. 4. We are to rejoice alway, which teaches us to cultivate the habit of looking on the bright side, of always being on the look out for compensation, of considering the purposes of difficulties, the lessons of adversity, the Sender of sorrows. II. FORBEARANCE. 1. In what does this show itself. (1) In waiving our just rights; not pushing them always to the utmost. (2) In checking ourselves under provocation: "not returning evil for evil, but contrariwise." This needs large Christian grace. 2. The powerful motive: "the Lord is at hand." (1) As seeing all. (2) As soon coming to end our vexations. III. DEVOUT TRUSTFULNESS. 1. In arguing this (ver. 7), the apostle does not teach us to have no care and let everything drift, but not to be full of care. Whilst we are ordering our affairs with discretion, we must not be over anxious. The Lord is at hand. His Providence will be equal to all emergencies. Do your best, and leave the issue to Him. 2. Let prayer be your antidote to worry. God knows what is best. Submit to His will, thankful for His many mercies. Gratitude is a condition of successful prayer. 3. The grand issue—the "peace of God." (1) Its channel—He in whom we have to rejoice. (2) Its character. (a) God-like. (b) Transcending every effort of the mind to grasp it. (3) Its effect. To stand sentry

and keep guard over the heart and mind. (*J. J. Goadby.*) *Christ's nearness:*—
I. A FACT STATED. "The Lord is at hand," may apply either to time or place. He is coming, and till He comes to wipe away our tears, to raise our dead, and fill us with glory, He is, in the meantime, our solace in trials, conflicts, difficulty and danger, our light in darkness, and our triumph in death. We greatly wrong Him to conceive of Him as above the stars. He is very nigh His people, the shade on their right hand. Let us therefore walk circumspectly, and let nothing cast us down. Let also our enemies beware. **II. THE COMMAND GROUNDED ON THE FACTS.**
1. "Rejoice in the Lord always." (1) How little there is of this amongst us. Yet the Lord is at hand that we may rejoice in Him as a Refuge, a Support, a Friend.
(2) The all-sufficient ground of this rejoicing. There is nothing "in Him" that is not an occasion for joy, life, righteousness, abounding grace. There is nothing our souls can want, our hope desire, our happiness need, our immortality grasp, that is not laid up in Him. **(3) There is no true joy that does not find its spring in Him.** **(4) This joy is perennial—whatever be our times, or circumstances, it is our privilege to rejoice.** **2. "Let your moderation," &c.** When the eye has once seen, the ear heard, the heart occupied with Christ, all other matters take a subordinate position. The attractions of the world are nothing, its anxieties are lost in the comfort of His love, and its entanglements cannot keep us from resting in His bosom. Sit, then, loosely to the things around you. Let men see that you have a better portion, and know by your forbearance, gentleness, and moderation, that the things that once occupied you are now quite secondary. What matter if other things fade from your grasp, if the presence of the Lord is realized in your soul.
3. "Be careful for nothing." (1) There is no need for this care. Think of the eye ever watching you, the arm around you. (2) Be not full of care; it does not mean be indifferent to the concerns of life, but be not anxious. The Lord is at hand; He will provide. There is nothing in God, in ourselves, in the world, or in Satan that we need be careful for. **4. "In everything by prayer," &c.** He is beside you, and you rob yourself of a great privilege if you keep back anything. Pour out your heart, only "with thanksgiving." Don't murmur. Thank Him for what He has done, is doing, and will do. **III. THE PRECIOUS PROMISE, which is conditional on the keeping of the commands. "The peace of God," &c.** **1. Christ has made peace with God.** **2. This peace must be apprehended and enjoyed** (Rom. xv. 13; 1 Pet. i. 8). It can only be enjoyed by faith, and it must be maintained by a consistent walk. **3. This peace will keep us from sinking, from sinning, it will keep us calm amidst disturbance, at rest amidst restlessness, tranquil in anticipation of death and judgment.** (*Marcus Rainsford.*) *Spiritual mindedness:*—There is a natural world, and there is a spiritual world. It is folly to ignore either. True wisdom lies in adequately acknowledging the claims of each, and skillfully adjusting their relations to each other. A man may be so engrossed by the natural, as to live as if there were no spiritual world, and *vice versa*. In the one case he becomes a materialist; in the other, a mystic. We are now in this world, and have duties here which religion must help us to discharge. But there is a spiritual world, and nothing gives such elevation of character, and such power and consistency of living, as a sense of its real presence. The spiritually-minded have ever been the pioneers of human progress. Paul did not disparage the life that now is; he rather exalted it by constantly bringing upon it the power of the life to come. In the text he represents the effect of a spiritual faith on this human life. The key to the whole is, "The Lord is at hand." There are four characteristics of spiritual mindedness as thus understood. **I. It will surprise materialists that the first is joy—the delightful enjoyment of the feelings of pleasure at good gained and actually enjoyed, or at the prospect of good which one has a reasonable hope of obtaining.** **1. The natural world can give joy.** (1) There is the joy of youth, when the blood is hot, and burdens have not bowed, and disappointment have not soured the man, where there are many beautiful hopes and no bitter memories. (2) The joy of health, when the humours are wholesome, the circulation unimpeded, the nerves unjaded, the lungs sound, and the brain clear; when food is pleasant, sleep sweet, and activity exhilarating. (3) The joy of success, when the battle has been won, the office secured, the bride wedded, the fortune made. (4) The joy of the affections, when the heart has loved well. **2. But the great defect in all joy that is not "in the Lord" is that it is transitory.** Youth, health, success, are good while they last, but they last so short a time. **3. Our faith does not offer us a choice as between natural and spiritual joy.** On the contrary, the sources of natural joy are intensified by our spiritual joys, and placed upon a more enduring basis. Would not

(let conscience speak) your natural joys be trebly sweet if you did not feel that if these were swept away there would be nothing left? If you did but "rejoice in the Lord" all of earth that is sweet and beautiful would be more so. To the spiritually-minded "the Lord is at hand" to help every human joy. II. To be spiritually-minded is to have habits of honesty in business, of candour, good temper and forgiveness, for that is the meaning of MODERATION. 1. This is a provoking world, full of things which create disagreeable feelings. The weariness and tricks of others make us shut up ourselves and become uncandid, and cynical, and hard. Life becomes a game. We must not show our hands. The wicked will take advantage of it, and we shall lose. 2. Well, if this natural life be all there is, we cannot afford to be candid and good-tempered toward all men. But a spiritually-minded man can so afford, "The Lord is at hand" to help him. Put Him away, saying that each man must care for himself only, and if you fail, no matter the failure; if you succeed, how barren the success. 3. Whether you will or not "the Lord is at hand." He sees all in the light of the spiritual world, and judges accordingly. He is at hand to help. The factory operative, the merchant, the capitalist, may all have a sense of His nearness, and if they have, then their moderation, fairness, self-control, and forgiveness will be known unto all men. III. ELEVATION OF SOUL—a serenity of temper over which the changes of life may pass as storms do over a mountain, loosing here and there a stone, breaking here and there a tree, shaking the whole mass and drenching it, but leaving the mountain rooted in the earth. 1. Much of our life is frittered away with carking cares and anxieties. These came from too close a look at things which are temporal. This nearness must be corrected by spiritual mindedness. To a man who has no feeling of the Lord's nearness every trouble exaggerates itself. He cannot put his full powers to any one thing, because he is troubled about many things. 2. Right spiritual-mindedness does not unfit us for the duties of life. Faith does not teach carelessness. It is the care that distracts which must be avoided. That is only avoided as a man comes to feel that the Lord stands by Him. That realized, he can attend to his multifarious duties without distraction. He has then a powerful motive to do his best, and that being done, he calmly leaves what he cannot do. IV. DEVOUTNESS—a sense of the presence of One who takes an interest in our lives, and to whom we can speak specifically about everything that concerns us, and therefore concerns Him, and from whom we can get direction and help. In conclusion, when we are spiritually-minded God's peace—1. Keeps our hearts steady and true when temptations and troubles and bereavements seem bearing them away. 2. Our minds. No mind loses its balance as long as it perceives the Lord at hand to help. 3. Through Jesus Christ, the connecting link. (*C. J. Deems, D.D.*) Joy:—The gospel takes hold of every string in human nature. The beginner only plays on the central octaves of the pianoforte, while the master-hand makes the seven octaves discourse music in their turn. Joy is soul-elation, or the feeling of extreme pleasure. There are certain conditions when that string is touched by the hand of truth. I. THE JOY OF CONVERSION. Relief from the burden of sin, and finding the pearl of great price. After Philip explained the matter, the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. No one can contemplate the fact that Christ is slain for His sins, and is risen for His justification, without experiencing a sense of happiness (Acts viii. 27-40). See also the account of the conversion of the Philipian jailer, and Lydia. Joy from a sense of safety is not the highest type, but very real. II. THE JOY OF CHRISTIAN-FELLOWSHIP. When friends meet, there is a reciprocal feeling of esteem (Acts ii. 40-47). Two old Peninsula veterans accidentally met after a separation of twenty years. Words could not depict the beaming faces. It was the joy of esteem. Whenever the apostles met their brethren there was joy. Paul, the prisoner, was full of happiness in anticipating to see the Philippians again. III. THE JOY OF SERVICE. God loves a cheerful giver. There was great joy when David collected the funds for the building of the Temple (1 Chron. xxix. 9). Greater still was the joy of the redeemed in building the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. xii. 43). God must be served with gladness. IV. THE JOY OF PROSPERITY. The Christian has no prosperity apart from the kingdom of Christ (Luke xv. 10). The father made a feast because the lost had been found. The visit of Philip to Samaria was blessed abundantly. "There was great joy in that city" (Acts viii. 8). The gospel is "good tidings of great joy to all people." The more souls are saved the more the joy of the Church (Luke x.) 5. The joy of special revelation. There are moments of supreme happiness given to all good people, such as the time of the Transfiguration. The

happiest moment in the life of the Christian is the last, when the servant is dismissed his present service in peace, and advancing towards the crown. One word of caution—see that the right motive produces joy. There are superficial influences of a charming nature, but without depth or worth. “Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.” When conscience says, rejoice, we are safe. It is a joy that will continue evermore. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *Christian joy*.—I. WHAT DOES THIS PRECEPT MEAN? 1. Joy, like every other simple emotion, cannot be defined; it must be felt to be known. The text enforces that form of joy which we should call habitual cheerfulness as—(1) Opposed to gloom and dejection. These are natural to some, fostered by the circumstances of many, but forbidden to a Christian. Though gloom be in harmony with my constitution or temperament, that cannot justify me in cherishing it. I may have a natural propensity to steal, but I am to fight against it; and so with a tendency to dejection. The Christian is not like Cain, a fugitive and without a friend; but like Abraham, whose resources for everything were in the sufficiency of God. What Habbakuk did (“although the fig-tree,” &c.) St. Paul tells all Christians to do, “Count it all joy when you fall into divers trials.” (2) As distinguished from levity and mirth. Mirth is an act, cheerfulness a habit. Mirth is like a meteor; cheerfulness like a star. Mirth is like crackling thorns; cheerfulness like a fire. Mirth is like a freshet formed by a sudden overflow; cheerfulness like a river fed by deep springs and numerous brooks. (3) As distinguished from indifference and insensibility. It is a positive state; a very distinct and vivid consciousness. A man may be very far from miserable; but it does not follow that he is cheerful. He may be stolid and callous of soul. 2. The text requires that cheerfulness should be habitual. (1) It is required of us in working. We are to earn our bread by the sweat of our brow or brain joyfully, not counting work a hardship. (2) There should be cheerfulness in giving, which God loves. (3) In Christian communion. (4) In general social intercourse. (5) In suffering. (6) In worship. 3. The precept directs us to derive our habitual cheerfulness from the Lord. No creature was ever happy in itself separated from God. You must not, therefore, try to get it from yourself. (1) You will never get it from increase of wealth. That brings increase of care. (2) Nor from the Church; (3) but from Christ; His character, advent, death, righteousness, exaltation. This is the lesson continually put before us in the Bible. “My people have committed two evils.” “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.” II. BY WHAT MAY THIS PRECEPT BE ENFORCED? I. Habitual religious cheerfulness is a personal advantage. (1) It benefits the body and the spirit. “A merry heart doeth good like medicine.” There are many persons who seriously impair their health by nursing gloom. Many nervous diseases may be traced to a state of mind cherished. (2) A man works with great power who cherishes this spirit: “Neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Soldiers after a long day’s march would hardly walk as nimbly as they do if they did not march to music. Get a cheerful heart and the yoke is easy and the burden light. 2. It is a strong qualification for rendering service to others. It is of little use trying to instruct, especially in religion, even a child, unless you are cheerful. And certainly a man is no use in the sick chamber, or in the house of bereavement, unless he has a cheerful heart. 3. If a Christian cannot rejoice always no man can. (1) The infidel cannot. (2) Nor the worldly. 4. For this the Christian has the largest possible provision. He has been born again, is a son of God and joint heir with Christ. It is quite true that Christians are soldiers and that the fight is hard, but victory is sure; they are racers and the running is exhausting, but the crown is sure; they are pilgrims and the journey is wearisome, but the arrival at home is sure; so that the soldier, racer, pilgrim, may rejoice always. 5. The precept is enforced by Divine authority, by the example and word of Christ. Conclusion: 1. When you are inclined to despondency, investigate the cause. “Why art thou cast down?” 2. When in circumstances that are grievous call before you all that is joyous and hopeful. How strange it is that people who have never had a real trouble are always grumbling. 3. Never lose sight of the fountain of gladness. 4. Avoid vain and foolish anticipations of evil. (*S. Martin.*) *The Christian’s joy*.—This joy is—I. INTELLECTUAL. 1. The reason has its moments of inexpressible delight. “Why do you sit up so late at night?” was asked of an eminent mathematician. “To enjoy myself.” “How? I thought you spent your time in working out problems.” “So I do, and there is the enjoyment. Those persons lose a form of enjoyment too keen to be described who do not know what it is to recognize after long effort and various failures, the true relation which exists between two mathematical formulæ.” We

may be strangers to this form of enjoyment, but we may know enough of other subjects to believe its reality. All knowledge is delightful to the human mind because it involves contact with fact, and this contact is welcome to the mind because the mind is made for God the Truth of truths, in whom as manifested in His Son are "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." 2. In our day this delight is especially observable in the study of nature. The "scientific spirit" is almost concentrated upon this study, and it deserves a warm welcome from Christians; for if revelation is God's second book, nature is His first. 3. And if the contact of mind with reality has thus a charm all its own, what should not be the delight of steadily contemplating God as He presents Himself to us in His revelation. There the Being, the perfection, the life of God, are spread out before us like a boundless ocean, that we may rejoice in Him always as the only, the perfect satisfaction of our intellectual nature. 4. But alas! while this is the case, a new plant in your botanical gardens, a newly discovered animal in your menageries, an octopus in your aquariums, will send a thrill of delight through those who claim to represent the most active thought of the day, and all the while the Being of beings, with all the magnificent array of His attractive and awful attributes is around you. How much of the mental life you bestow so ungrudgingly on His creatures is given to Him! O intelligence of man, that was made for something higher than any created thing, understand, before it is too late, thy magnificent destiny and rejoice in the Lord. II. MORAL. 1. It is the active, satisfied experience of a moral nature, a coming in contact with the uncreated and perfect moral Being. Joy has much more to do with the affections than with the reason. It is the play of the affections upon an object which responds to them and satisfies them. To the man of family, his wife and children call out and sustain this delight, which the ordinary occupations of his intellect rarely stimulate. And little as he may think it, on that threshold, beside that cradle, the man stands face to face with the attributes of the everlasting Being who has infused His tenderness and His love into the works of His hands. 2. God's attributes of holiness, justice, mercy, may well delight the human mind, but they address themselves inevitably to our moral nature. As we gaze on God the holy, we turn our eyes on ourselves, and ask "If He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity what does He see in me?" Between that uncreated beauty and our enfeebled, broken nature, we know that some dark shadow has passed, and yet light enough is left to enable us to see how little we are like Him. Man, conscious of this radical flaw hides himself from the Lord God and a deep gloom takes possession of him. He would fain bury himself in amusement or work—anyhow—in self-forgetfulness—anywhere out of the sight of God. 3. The work of our Saviour has made it again possible to rejoice in God. Christ has destroyed the discord between our conscience and His holiness. His graces establishes a union between the believing soul and its object. "We are accepted in the beloved." Read Rom. v. 1-11 and see what are the consequences of this new relation to God. (1) Peace; and then as the soul finds what it is to have entered into the state of grace comes (2) Joy; and joy as it is one of the first experiences, so in its more magnificent forms it is the crowning gift of the new life. Not only being reconciled shall we be saved by Christ's life, but we also joy in God through Christ from whom we have received the atonement. The old fear which skulks away behind the trees of the garden is gone. Clinging to the Cross of Christ we behold the face of the Father, and "with joy we draw water out of the wells of salvation." Conclusion: 1. Our power of rejoicing in the Lord is a fair test of our moral condition. The heart that does not "break forth into joy" at the mention of His name is surely paralyzed or dead. If earthly friends, pleasures, &c., rouse in us keen sensations of delight, and this name which is above every name, this love which transcends earthly affections, finds and leaves us cold and unconcerned, be sure that it cannot be well with us. 2. This power of rejoicing is the Christian's main support under the trials of life. St. Paul after saying that we rejoice in hope of the glory of God adds, "not only so but we glory in tribulations." 3. This power is one of the great motive forces of the Christian life. Within the regenerate soul it is a well of water springing up into everlasting life, fertilizing everything—thought, feeling, resolution, worship: it gives a new impulse to what before was passive or dead, and makes outward efforts and inward graces possible, which else had been undreamt of. (Canon Liddon.) *Joy a duty*:—Joy drives out discord. Our text follows as a remedy upon disagreement (vers. 1-2). Joy helps against the trials of life. Hence it is mentioned as a preparation for the rest of faith (ver. 6). I. THE GRACE COMMANDED—"Rejoice." 1. It is delightful: our soul's jubilee has

come when joy enters. 2. It is demonstrative : it is more than peace ; it sparkles, shines, sings. Why should it not ? Joy is a bird ; let it fly in the open heavens, and its music be heard of all men. 3. It is stimulating, and urges its possessor to brave deeds. 4. It is influential for good. Sinners are attracted to Jesus by the joy of saints. More flies are caught by a spoonful of honey than by a barrel of vinegar. 5. It is contagious. Others are gladdened by our rejoicing. 6. It is commanded. It is not left optional. It is commanded because (1) It makes us like God. (2) It is for our profit. (3) It is good for others. II. THE JOY DISCRIMINATED. 1. As to the sphere—"In the Lord." That is the sacred circle wherein the Christian's life should always be spent. 2. As to the object. (1) In the Lord, Father, Son, and Spirit ; in the Lord Jesus, crucified, risen, &c. (2) Not in (a) temporals, personal, political, pecuniary. (b) Nor in special privileges, which involve greater responsibility. (c) Nor even in religious successes (Luke x. 20). (d) Nor in self and its doings (Phil. iii. 3). III. THE TIME APPOINTED—"Always." 1. When you cannot rejoice in any other, rejoice in God. 2. When you can rejoice in other things, sanctify all with joy in God. 3. When you have not before rejoiced, begin at once. 4. When you have long rejoiced, do not cease for a moment. 5. When others are with you, lead them in this direction. 6. When you are alone, enjoy to the full this rejoicing. IV. THE EMPHASIS LAID ON THE COMMAND—"Again I say, Rejoice." Paul repeats his exhortation. 1. To show his love to them. He is intensely anxious that they should share his joy. 2. To suggest the difficulty of continual joy. He twice commands, because we are slow to obey. 3. To assert the possibility of it. After second thoughts, he feels that he may fitly repeat the exhortation. 4. To impress the importance of the duty. Whatever else you forget, remember this : Be sure to rejoice. 5. To allow of special personal testimony. "Again I say, rejoice." Paul rejoiced. He was habitually a happy man. This Epistle to the Philippians is peculiarly joyous. Let us look it through. (1) He sweetens prayer with joy (i. 4). (2) He rejoices that Christ is preached (i. 18). (3) He wishes to live to gladden the Church (i. 25). (4) To see the members likeminded was his joy (ii. 2). (5) It was his joy that he should not run in vain (ii. 16). (6) His farewell to them was, "Rejoice in the Lord" (iii. 1). (7) He speaks of those who rejoice in Christ Jesus (iii. 3). (8) He calls his converts his joy and crown (iv. 1). (9) He expresses his joy in their kindness (iv. 4, 10, 18). Conclusion : To all our friends let us use this as a blessing : "Rejoice in the Lord." (C. H. Spurgeon.) *The duty of rejoicing* :—I. THERE ARE SOME PRECEPTS OF SCRIPTURE WHICH WE MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY IN PERFORMING, BUT WHICH, AT LEAST, WE HAVE THE POWER OF ATTEMPTING. Such, *e.g.*, as to forsake a bad habit or to undertake a certain course of action. BUT THERE ARE OTHERS WHICH SEEM TO ENJOIN WHAT IS BEYOND OUR POWER, *e.g.*, those which demand a particular aspect of mind, whatever may be our feelings, such as our text. It seems strange that joy should be a duty. Unless there be cause for it, how can we have the power ? Well, we may surely reckon up our occasions for sorrow and joy, and if the latter preponderate we might, at least, be ashamed of being unhappy, and that is a great preparation for a thankful state of mind. When a man is downcast, he is often raised by a friend who points out that things are not so bad as he thinks. And the Christian has reasons for joy which far outweigh reasons for sorrow. Count up then your mercies. Adjust yourselves to the breathings of God's Spirit. If you cannot call forth the melody which slumbers in the heart, you can awaken the breeze of its music. II. JOYFULNESS IS AS MUCH WITHIN OUR POWER AS HONESTY AND INDUSTRY. It is not as though it were only a question of natural disposition, &c. One great purpose of religion is to furnish us with motives and aids to correct our natural temperament, and to bring into play moral forces to counteract those which are opposite to good. Is not the Christian entitled to discharge all his cares on God's providence ; lay his sins on God's Son ; and his fears on God's promises ? Has he an excuse then for being disquieted. III. SOME CHRISTIANS REGARD JOY AS PERMITTED BUT NOT AS COMMANDED, a privilege, not a duty. Had this been so numbers would have wanted it ; but as God has enjoined it all must strive after it, and that for many reasons. The believer is asked to state what is religion. If he fails to rejoice he brings disgrace upon it, for he is disobedient. And here is the triumph of infidelity ; and the inquirer after religion is deterred when he sees in its professors, how it defers the happiness of which he is in search. IV. AS JOY IS A COMMAND WHICH PROCEEDS FROM GOD'S MOUTH, SO IT MAY BE KEPT BY GOD'S GRACE. We are bidden to rejoice "in the Lord." Whatever be the attribute contemplated there is reason for gladness even in the holiness which condemns our sin. For

did not that very holiness provide a means whereby the sinner might be honourably and eternally forgiven. If there be nothing in God in which we may not rejoice, it is evident that there is nothing in the universe. V. THE REDEEMER IS A MODEL FOR THE CHRISTIAN IN THIS AS IN EVERY OTHER VIRTUE. He who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross says, "Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full." VI. HALF THE DEPRESSION OF CHRISTIANS ARISES FROM LOOKING AT AND INTO THEMSELVES. Even when looking at Christ for righteousness, they look to themselves for comfort. It is Christ's hold on the believer that makes him safe. Rejoice, then, in the Lord. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Christians joyful in the Lord*:—As sorrow is attendant on sin, so is joy the companion of holiness. Joy is a feeling of pleasure caused by the remembrance of some past, the possession of some present, or the hope of some future good. I. The Christian looks back on the past. Then sin on his own part is seen side by side with love upon God's. He thinks with sorrow of his sinfulness, but remembers the forbearance which withheld the Almighty hand, the goodness that led to repentance and the grace that saved, and so rejoices in the Lord. II. The present gives the same cause for rejoicing. There is much to abase and arouse painful feelings, but in the prayer which brings fresh supplies of strength, in the grace which is all-sufficient, in the promises, and in the work of faith and labour of love there is abundant cause for joy. III. The future presents a joyful outlook. The extinction of sin, the removal of all hindrances to holiness, the full blessedness of body and soul in heaven. (*Canon Chamneys.*) *Constant joy in God the duty of Christians*:—I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS DUTY. 1. That Christians are pleased that God exists. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Man in a state of nature dreads God. Naturally wishful of independence he dislikes the idea of one above him who can dispose of him according to His pleasure. But in Christians this enmity has been slain. 2. That they are pleased that He exists possessed of all Divine perfections. They could not rejoice in Him were it possible for Him to make a mistake or use any deception. 3. That they are pleased that He formed the most wise, just, and benevolent designs from eternity. 4. That they rejoice in His constant execution of His original designs. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice." II. THE PROPERTY OF THIS DUTY. No one questions the duty of rejoicing sometimes; but how always? Is there not a time to weep? Thousands of things are the proper objects of mourning. Yes; but the text says: "Rejoice in the Lord." In Him there is no ground for mourning. And even mourning over evil things admits of an element of joy, inasmuch as they are ever working out His plans. We mourn over our afflictions, yet we may rejoice in God, inasmuch as a patient may rejoice in the skill of the surgeon while he bewails the pain of amputation. III. THE REASONS FOR THIS DUTY. We are to rejoice because—1. God always knows what is best to do with all His creatures. He is the only wise God. 2. He is always immutably disposed to do what is best. As a father feels towards his children the Father of mercies feels towards His whole family. The fountain of all good is in its own nature a just cause of rejoicing apart from the thousand streams of goodness which flow from it. 3. He is absolutely able to do what is best. If there were a single case of inability it would wreck our confidence in Him. 4. If, then, He knows what is best, is disposed to do what is best, and able to do it, He certainly always will do it. Improvement: 1. To rejoice in God always is the most difficult duty Christians have to perform. It is easy to rejoice in favours; but how about trials. 2. To discharge this duty is to do what is most pleasing to God, implying as it does the purest faith, love, and obedience. 3. To do this is to do peculiar honour to religion. Mere selfishness will dispose men to rejoice when they receive good at the hand of God. 4. Those who obey this precept are the happiest men in the world. Men of the world are in some measure happy, but their rejoicing is often interrupted. 5. To neglect this precept is unwise, sinful, and injurious. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *Christian rejoicing*:—I. WHAT IT IS. 1. It is more than contentment. To be content is not to murmur, not to wish for a better lot; to rejoice is to be right glad, and to be persuaded that we have got the best we could expect. 2. Can this be the duty of the disciples of the "Man of Sorrows"? Undoubtedly a true Christian is serious, and often sad (*Psa. cxix. 136; 2 Cor. vii. 7*); and therefore has no part in such mirth and revelry as flows from thoughtlessness and intemperance. 3. But it does not follow that he may not be truly happy—only his rejoicing is in the spirit, "in the Lord." And to thus rejoice must be compatible with sorrow for sin and self-denial; yet for all this it may be a real, lively, and lasting satisfaction (*1 Peter i. 8; Rom. viii. 8; Matt. xvii. 4*). II. WHEN IT MAY BE FELT. 1. In

prosperity; especially if we have set our hearts on God's good gifts of grace. But it consists not in the goods we enjoy, but in those we hope for; not in the pleasures we experience, but in the promise of those which seeing not we believe. Riches may abound, but we know they are of no value compared to those in heaven; health may flourish, but what is that compared with life for evermore; friends and families may grow up and multiply the joy of all we have, but these serve only the more to make us glad that we have a Friend who will never fail and a home where with them we may enjoy His blessed company for ever. 2. In adversity; which was the condition of those here addressed. Paul repeats his words as though aware that it might seem a hard saying. But the grounds of their rejoicing are yours. For you the same Saviour died; for you there is the same heaven, the same unsearchable riches. Do you believe all this? Then rejoice. 3. In temptation. Whichever way this comes we are prone at first to be sorry, because of our weakness and proneness to fall. Yet James (i. 2) tells us to rejoice. Why? Because one thus feels sin to be the heaviest of afflictions, which is thus a sign of grace. So St. Peter (1 Pet. iv. 12-13). Whatever then may be the trials of our faith now we are to rejoice because we shall be glad hereafter when Christ's glory shall be revealed. Thus may we pray not to be led into it, and yet when brought into it rejoice that by God's grace we may come out of it triumphant. 4. In death. Nowhere is Christian joy distinguished from worldly satisfactions more than here. For this is the introduction to an eternal consummation. (1) We lose nothing by the change we call death. We cease to breathe; but we still feel, think, love, and are beloved. If we part with our friends it is only for a brief season. (2) Besides, losing nothing we gain everything (Matt. vi. 19). (*C. Girdlestone, M.A.*) *Rejoicing in Christ*:—I. IN HIS ATONEMENT (Rom. v. 11). II. IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS (Rom. iv). III. IN HIS FAITHFULNESS (chap. i. 6). IV. IN HIS POWER. "Kept by the power of God." 1. In sorrow. 2. In persecution. 3. In bereavement. 4. In death. (*R. J. McGhee, A.M.*) *Rejoicing in God*:—I. GOD WHO REQUIRES HIS PEOPLE TO REJOICE AFFORDS THEM AMPLE REASON FOR DOING SO: HENCE THE REQUIREMENT IS REASONABLE AND PRACTICABLE. The Christian is not required to rejoice in nothing or in an inadequate cause: but in the Lord all-sufficient. II. THERE EXISTS EQUAL REASON WHY THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD REJOICE IN GOD AT ALL TIMES AS AT ANY TIME. The cause is uniform, so should be the effect. If God ceased to be his friend then he might cease to rejoice, but not otherwise (Hab. iii. 17-18). III. JOY AND SORROW IN THE SAME HEART AND AT THE SAME TIME ARE PERFECTLY COMPATIBLE. There may exist contemporaneously reasons for both sorrow and joy. "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." When we are commanded to rejoice always it is not meant that we should rejoice only. IV. IN THE CASE OF THE CHRISTIAN THE CAUSES OF JOY ALWAYS PREDOMINATE OVER THOSE OF SORROW. Not so with the sinner. A saint may lose a part of his possessions; but the larger part he cannot lose. V. THE VERY SORROWS OF THE CHRISTIAN ARE TO BE REJOICED IN. They work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Inferences: 1. If it is our duty to be happy then it is a sin to be miserable. 2. How grossly they misrepresent religion who speak of it as a gloomy thing. 3. We learn what it is that makes the soul happy. Not the world; that is passing away; but the Lord who abides. 4. If God alone can make His creatures happy what madness it is to live in ignorance of Him, or in estrangement from Him. (*W. Nevins, D.D.*) *Sunshine: a talk for happy times*:—I. REJOICE IN THE LORD. At the outset—1. Don't think this means—(1) a seventh-heaven rapture. Nothing is easier, more common, or disheartening than the way we exaggerate religious joy. It is not given to many of us to soar to great heights; much less to live there. We want a joy that can walk along life's dusty roads, as a good day's work, and thrive amidst bustle and home cares. (2) The short lived off-spring of a passing excitement; an April day of sunshine, and showers that end in a night of sharp frost. (3) Nor is it the childlike merriment of good spirits. (4) Nor a natural hopefulness that forgets the past, and doesn't trouble much about the future. 2. But it is a calm, deep, settled gladness in the Lord. (1) It does not change life so that there are no difficulties and burdens; but it edges the clouds with brightness, and in the darkness it can always see the stars. It does not turn the desert into a garden, but it is an angel presence bidding us "fear not," and opening our eyes, it shows us "a well of water." (2) It is of much importance that we keep from exaggerations. Many young people turn from religion disappointed because they have been encouraged to look for sustained raptures and have not found them. (3) Depend upon it this "oil of gladness" is something that

commonplace, everyday people can have if they will. II. THE INGREDIENTS OF THIS JOY. It is not distilled from rare exotics and delicate plants that grow only in hothouses and cost much to cultivate. There are three simples growing just by the gate of the King's garden, and whoever will cultivate and mix them shall have this balm. 1. The sturdy plant Confidence—the superlative degree of hope; that in the dark to-day sings of a bright to-morrow; that does not think or believe that a loving Father orders all things, but rests in the assurance of it. 2. Confidence must be mixed equally with a little lowly plant that grows on the bank of the river—Contentment—a rarer plant than the other. Contentment keeps its desires level with its condition. When much is taken it counts up how much is left, and turns the evil round to find a better face upon it, thinking of the worse that might have been. 3. Put in Gratitude, to enrich it and make it sparkle. III. BUT IF IT BE THUS EASILY MADE WHY IS IT SO UNCOMMON? 1. There are timid souls who have not the courage to forget themselves. 2. There are the stern, the gloomy, the severe, possibly too selfish to forget themselves, or too exact to forget anything. Hard-natured men of narrow sympathies to whom the brighter things of the world are vanities. Music and children and flowers and holidays have no charms for them. Business, duty, absorbs them. O! it is a pitiful thing when all the child is dead in men. 3. There are those whose religion is mostly a regular observance of services, a half-hearted round of duty. The religion that rejoices in the Lord must have something intense about it. A languid, pale-faced, sickly man who gets up for an hour or two and sits by the fire can't enjoy anything; he hasn't vigour enough. Type of dead-alive Christians, whose religion is true enough, but they have not enough of it. They want more warmth and life and heart. IV. CAN CHRISTIANS AFFORD TO LIVE WITHOUT THIS JOY IN THE LORD? 1. It is repeatedly commanded. Is he guiltless who passes by the word with light indifference? 2. It is encouraged by every promise and precept. May not the man suspect the religion that is so unlike the Scripture sample? 3. It is the natural fruit of spiritual life: and if the fruit be wanting, the tree is not worth having. 4. Surely we have no business to keep twitting the world about a peace it can neither give nor take away, if all we can tell them is a dismal tale of trials and temptations, failure and sin. This is not what the Bible holds out to us, what Christ purchased for us, and is not likely to fetch home the prodigal from the far country. V. HOW MAY WE MAKE THIS JOY OUR OWN? Confidence, Contentment, Gratitude, where can we find them? only in the King's garden. 1. We must go out of ourselves for everything worth having. He who sees self will never see anything but what he may weep over. He who sees the Lord may live always triumphing. 2. The opposite to this joy is not sorrow. The Man of Sorrows was "anointed with the oil of joy above His fellows." (1) The real kill-joy is worry. Hundreds of religious people trust the Lord to save their souls; but to feed and clothe the body, train the children, &c., all that they must fret over as if their loving Father did not sit on the throne. (2) The wasp nest of ill temper. This too may be conquered. "I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me." (*Mark Guy Pearse.*) *Amusements in the light of the gospel.*—The text shows that religion is no kill-joy: and yet it is frequently regarded as involving a renunciation of the pleasures of life. To ascertain the relation of piety to amusements is of great importance. Every man has leisure and inclination for amusement. How far may it be indulged? A man is made or marred by the way in which he spends his leisure. A certain amount of amusement is beneficial, but multitudes are ruined by amusement. I. THE EXTENT TO WHICH MERE AMUSEMENT IS NEEDFUL AND BENEFICIAL. 1. The "always" of the text covers the whole sphere of life but mere amusement can only be an occasional thing, and therefore not the only form of happiness. That must be found also in those experiences, duties, toils, anxieties, and sorrows which constitute the main stream of our daily life. 2. The key to this is "in the Lord." If God makes us glad we may be always glad. A richer joy may be found in discharging life's duties and bearing its burdens so as to secure God's approval than in any amount of amusement. 3. Seeing that it would be a great mistake to seek happiness in amusements which would imperil the proper conduct of life's more serious business. He who neglects duty for amusement makes a great mistake. II. WHAT TEACHING THERE IS IN THE TEXT RESPECTING THE LAWFULNESS OF AMUSEMENTS AND THE MAIN PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE US. 1. Rejoicing is a Christian duty. Hence we ought to cultivate it as much as justice, &c. 2. Can cheerfulness be cultivated without paying special attention to the matter? Certainly not: hence the gospel sanctions a certain amount of amusement. Happiness is the outcome of the healthy play of our faculties. Now

in the daily stress some of them are sure to be overstrained. Our constitution is like a harp of many strings. To keep it in tune, therefore, we must naturally give the overstrained strings periodic rest, but touch up the others and play upon them: this is amusement, and the text implies its necessity. 3. But what kind of amusement does the gospel sanction? (1) Our pleasures must be pure and unselfish, to be indulged in in the spirit of holiness and kindly consideration for others. We are to rejoice in the Lord always; and holiness and unselfishness were the most conspicuous features of Christ's character. 4. God has placed within the reach of all an infinite amount of ennobling entertainment. In the world around us there is an inexhaustible wealth of beauty, grandeur, and skill whose observation and imitation supply us with abundant entertainment. (1) We are born into a theatre where a drama of the most thrilling interest, now comedy, now tragedy, now both, is constantly going forward, and we are taking our own little part in it. (2) We are born into a museum such as monarch never erected. (3) We are born into a palace whose roof is the firmament, whose walls the horizon, and whose floor the earth and sea. (4) Besides this music, art, poetry, and literature are at command. (5) And, yet more, God has so made us that the lawful satisfaction of our appetites and exercise of our bodies may be a constant source of pleasure. 5. How is it, then, that we make such a mess of our amusements. We want—(1) Christ's training to make us Christlike in our tastes and habits—eyes trained to appreciate beauty in form and colour; ears trained to appreciate music, and a decided taste formed for literature and science. The lower appetites are always ripe for entertainment—the higher want cultivating, and the lower will then give way. (2) Unselfishness and charity in our pleasures. The man who can amuse himself at the expense of wife and children or any of his fellows, cannot rejoice in the Lord, and such amusements will always be unhallowed and unblessed. (*Dr. Colborne.*) *Christian rejoicing*:—To rejoice is in one sense a happiness, in another a duty. In one sense it is an art: there are those who contrive to rejoice, find food for joy, where others can see nothing but gloom and grief; in another aspect it is an attainment; a result arrived at by long experience, in the latter days of a consistent Christian course. But in every point of view Christian joy can only be found in the Lord; by communion with Him, by close watching, by living much in things above. Compromises with the world drive it away. Sin destroys it in a moment. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Afraid of joy*:—Joy has been considered by Christian people very largely as an exceptional state; whereas sobriety—by which is meant severity of mind or a non-enjoying state of mind—is supposed to be the normal condition. I knew a Roman Catholic priest that was as upright and conscientious a man as ever I met, who said he did not dare to be happy; he was afraid that he should lose his soul if he was; and he subjected himself to every possible mortification, saying, "It is not for me to be happy here, I must take it out when I get to heaven. There I expect to be happy." That was in accordance with his view of Christianity. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The happiness of religion*:—An infidel was lecturing in a village in the North of England, and at the close he challenged discussion. Who should accept the challenge but an old bent woman in most antiquated attire, who went up to the lecturer and said, "Sir, I have a question to put to you." "Well, my good woman, what is it?" "Ten years ago," she said, "I was left a widow with eight children utterly unprovided for, and nothing to call my own but this Bible. By its direction, and looking to God for strength, I have been enabled to feed myself and family. I am now tottering to the grave, but I am perfectly happy, because I look forward to a life of immortality with Jesus in heaven. That is what my religion has done for me. What has your way of thinking done for you?" "Well, my good lady," rejoined the lecturer, "I don't want to disturb your comfort; but—" "Oh, that's not the question," interposed the woman; "keep to the point, sir. What has your way of thinking done for you?" The infidel endeavoured to shirk the matter again; the feeling of the meeting gave vent to uproarious applause, and he had to go away discomfited by an old woman. *Christian cheerfulness*:—Of Major Vandeleur, one of the most beautiful characters found among the Christians of the Crimean War, another officer who knew him at Gibraltar said to his biographer, Miss Marsh: "Everybody on the old rock liked Vandeleur, and regretted him when he left us. He was 'blue' you know (*i.e.*, religious), but then he was such a bright blue! No gay man, I should think, was ever half so cheerful and charming as a companion." (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *The oil of joy*:—Years ago a party on board a pleasure-yacht in the United States discovered to their dismay that they were being silently and slowly drawn towards the Falls of Niagara. Skill and energy began at once to cope

with the horrible emergency. The furnace was filled and refilled with wood until the fuel at command was entirely exhausted. What was to be done? Dismay showed itself on every face, and despair was paralysing them when a happy thought occurred to an officer. The oil used for the machinery of the steam-engine was thrown into the fire. This gave just sufficient impetus for the moving of the vessel out of the strong current into smooth water, and she was saved. "The oil of joy" keeps many a one from being swept over the rapids of temptation. Let us, then, "rejoice in the Lord"—rejoice in His nearness, sufficiency, and immutability. (T. L. Nye.)

The motive for rejoicing:—The motive for a repetition of this exhortation lies in the immediately foregoing context. Those "whose names are in the book of life" may well have within their breasts, even now, the sweetness and the calm of their promised bliss. The Saviour's own express command to His disciples sets this directly before us (Luke x. 20). (J. Hutchison, D.D.)

Uninterrupted Christian joy:—If the Christian's joy be interrupted it ought only to be as the sun's brightness may be dimmed by a passing cloud, which quickly leaves the firmament as radiant as before. (H. Melvill, B.D.) Napoleon when sent to Elba, adopted, in proud defiance of his fate, the motto, "Ubique felix." It was not true in his case; but the Christian may be truly "happy everywhere" and always. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Means of Christian joy:—If you go into Steinway's manufactory and strike certain chords of the powerful instruments, the chords of the other instruments, though they are covered up and apparently mute, will sound. Such are the correspondences which exist between them, such is the sympathy which is communicated from one to the other by the fact, that when one vibrates, all vibrate. Though the sound be low and almost inaudible, it is there. When the grandeur, beauty, and love of the Divine nature are presented to a man, they draw some response from every part of his nature which corresponds to that which is presented. When the hearts of men are drawn towards the heart of God there begins to be an interplay between them; and thus Christian rejoicing, while only possible, is inevitable, "in the Lord." (H. W. Beecher.)

The sphere of Christian joy:—God has made the human soul, and every instinct of faculty that composes it for Himself. He alone is the key to unlock its varied and mysterious powers, to discover their true range and capacity; and as this is the case with the other emotions so it is with joy. Joy, undoubtedly, that active sense of happiness which caresses the object which provokes it; which seeks some outlet or expression of its buoyancy—joy has an immense field of modified exercise in the sphere of sense and time, and Scripture recognizes this in a hundred ways. "To the counsellors of peace there is joy." A man hath "joy by the answer of his mouth." The virgin, in Jeremiah, "rejoices in the dance," and Isaiah speaks of the "joy of harvest," and of the "rejoicing" of men after victory "who divide the spoil;" and Solomon observes that "folly is joy to him who is destitute of wisdom;" and James knows of Christians who "rejoice in their boastings, whose rejoicing is evil." The range of joy is almost as wide as that of human thought and enterprise. Its complete satisfaction is only to be found in God. God is the "exceeding joy" of the Psalmist. God is the one object who can draw out and give play to the soul's capacity for active happiness; and therefore the Psalmist's heart "dances for joy," and his mouth "praiseth God with joyful lips," and he bids the children of Zion "be joyful in their King;" and he looks out on heathendom, and would have all lands, if it were possible, "make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob;" and he looks out on nature and bids the "field be joyful and all that is in it, and the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord." This is the language of exuberant delight, and St. Paul is only adopting the expression of the Psalmist, of Israel, of Joel, of Habakkuk, of Zechariah, when he bids the Philippian "rejoice in the Lord." (Canon Liddon.)

Why Christians are not joyful:—Our florists make up packages of seeds labelled "Gorgeous purple," "Exceedingly beautiful," "Remarkably fine," and so on, referring to the flowers. Now let these seeds go into the lands of a clumsy person who has perhaps raised corn and potatoes, but who has never raised flowers; and let him plant them in cold, wet, barren soil, and at an untimely season. A few of them will sprout, and will come slowly up, pale and spindling, and will be neglected, and the weeds will overrun them; and when the time for blossoming comes there will be found here and there a scrawny plant, with one or two stingy blossoms, and men will say, "Now we see the outcome of this pretence. Look at the labels. It is all humbug." But do you not perceive that the way in which you plant the seed, and the preparation of the soil, and the season have much to do with the successful growth? It is true that beautiful plants might have been produced.

They were deserving of all the praise bestowed upon them. There was no deception. They might have been what they were represented, but they are not for want of knowledge, skill, and adaptation of conditions to ends. There may be persons who suppose because Christianity is joy-producing that when they become Christians they will be joyful. They suppose that they are to take it as they would nitrous oxide gas, a magnificent Divine intoxicant, and are miserably disappointed when ecstatic effects do not take place. And the reason why there is not more joy in the Church is because you do not know how to plant the seeds and cultivate the flowers. They are real seeds, and the flowers are beautiful, and the plant bears blessed fruit to those who know how to give it proper culture. If you have the faith of Christ and heaven and God near to you; if you so love that all parts of your being are pervaded with a sense of these things; if the affluence of God reaches down to you and you open your soul to let in the consciousness of Christ, you will have joy. "Oh" says one, "I might be joyful if I were not so harassed with care." "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." There is provision made in Christ for care. "But I have such grief!" "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous" &c. If the earth had sensibility when the spade opened it, it would cry, "Oh! why art thou wounding me?" But in that open earth I drop seed, and cover up again, and by and by the ground is covered with beautiful flowers—does the earth mourn now? God is opening the furrow in you and putting in seeds. It is affliction to you now, but afterward it will produce in you the peaceable fruit of righteousness. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *No joy in heathenism*:—The old Greeks and Romans had their pleasures, their glories, their learning, their art, but theirs was not a happy life. There was always a shadow across their path, a skeleton at their feast. They saw the roses which crowned their heads wither and die; they saw the pale messenger, death, knocking with impartial hand at the doors of rich and poor alike. They knew that they grew older, and nearer the grave, and beyond that they knew nothing. There was no hope. They grew weary of the dance and the wine cup; they looked on their painted walls at Rome, or Pompeii, and felt that they cared for them no longer. They had ceased to believe in their cold, passionless gods of wood and stone, who could give them no help, no comfort; they were "without God in the world." Such was the selfish life of the heathen, without God. No wonder that one day the Roman, who had nothing to live for, nothing to hope for, entered his bath, and opened a vein, and so bled quietly and painlessly to death. This is what a famous Greek poet said about life, that it was best of all not to be born, and the next best thing was to get quit of life as soon as possible. How differently speaks the Christian, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *No joy in infidelity or worldliness*:—The infidel cannot be habitually cheerful. Hear Hume say in his treatise on human nature, "I am affrighted and confounded with that forlorn solitude in which I am placed by my philosophy. When I look abroad, I see on every side dispute, contradiction, distraction. When I turn my eyes inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. Where am I and what? From what causes do I derive my existence and to what condition shall I return? I am confounded with this question, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable." Here you have one of the most philosophic, and, in many respects, one of the best of infidels, making this as his confession. Then, if you turn to the man of poetry and pleasure, Lord Byron says "There is nothing but misery in this world, I think." This sentence was not written for effect; it was the genuine outpouring of that man's heart. He had tried everything earthly. He certainly had been to every human and temporal fountain of enjoyment. He had gone through experience like that through which the wise man takes us in the Book of Ecclesiastes, and this is his conclusion—"There is nothing but misery in this world, at least, so I think." (*S. Martin.*)

Ver. 5. Let your moderation be known unto all men.—I. WHAT IS MODERATION? An equal temperament of mind. 1. Moderate in undergoing afflictions (Luke xxi. 19). (1) They are less than we deserve (Lam. iii. 39; Ezra ix. 13). (2) They are balanced by other mercies. (3) They produce spiritual blessings (Heb. xii. 10). 2. Moderate in our love to, and desires of, all temporal enjoyments (Jer. xlv. 5). (1) Because they are temporal (1 John ii. 15-17). (2) The more we desire them, the more we may (Eccles. i. 7-8; iv. 8). (3) They can never make us happy. 3. Moderate in our enjoyment of temporal mercies. (1) We may easily exceed (Jude 2; Luke xxi. 34). (2) Excess changes their nature into curses. 4.

Moderate in our anger for injuries received. (1) So as not to let it boil up into hatred (Matt. v. 22, 44). (2) Nor continue long (Eph. iv. 26). 5. Moderate in our cares about the world (Phil. iv. 6). (1) So as to make use of no unlawful means to get an estate (Jer. xvii. 11; Prov. xxii. 16). (2) So as not to neglect our souls for our bodies (Matt. vi. 33). II. HOW KNOWN UNTO ALL MEN. 1. So as that it may be real and apparent (Matt. v. 16). 2. Universal, towards all (1 Pet. i. 15). III. THE REASON. "The Lord is at hand." How? 1. So as to be present everywhere (Psa. cxxxix. 7; Prov. xv. 3). (1) Otherwise He would not be infinite, and so not God. He is everywhere. (1) In His substance (Jer. xxiii. 23-24). (2) So as to know what is done everywhere (Heb. iv. 13). (3) So as to observe and ponder every action (Prov. v. 21; xv. 3). 2. He is ready to come to judgment (Heb. x. 37). (1) To examine our actions (Eccles. xii. 14). (2) To give to every one according to their deserts (2 Cor. v. 10). (3) We know not how soon. (1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10; Mark iii. 35, 36). Uses. 1. Have a care of excess, but be moderate in all things. Consider—(1) By this means you will always keep yourself in an even frame (Luke xxi. 19). (2) You will avoid sorrow as well as sin. 2. Often consider the omnipresence of God—in your civil commerces, in solitude, in company, when you pray and hear. 3. Often consider that the Lord is at hand to judge either to eternal misery or joy (Matt. xxv. 46). (*Bishop Beveridge.*) *Moderation: a fable*:—Hamet and Raschid, two neighbouring shepherds of India, in a time of great drought, made a request each of the Genius of Distribution: Hamet for a little brook which would never dry in summer, and in winter never overflow. Immediately the genius caused the fountain to bubble at his feet, and scatter its rills over the meadows: the flowers renewed their fragrance, the trees spread a greener foliage, and the flocks and herds quenched their thirst. Raschid, not satisfied with Hamet's moderate request, desired the genius to turn the Ganges through his grounds, with all its waters and all their inhabitants. As Raschid was looking with contempt upon Hamet and his small request, he heard, on a sudden, the roar of torrents, and saw a mighty stream come rolling on, which was the Ganges broken loose from its bounds. The flood rolled forward into the lands of Raschid: his plantations were torn up, his flocks overwhelmed, he was swept away before it, and a crocodile devoured him. (*Dr. Johnson.*) *Christian moderation*:—I. THE PRINCIPLE. 1. As to moderation in certain habits. (1) An ancient moralist tells us that virtue is a medium between two extremes. The extreme opposite to a vice is not a virtue, though everything opposite to virtue must be vice. Virtue is a road which has a hedge and ditch on both sides. Frugality, *e.g.*, is such a road. If you break through the hedge on one side, you fall into wastefulness; if on the other, into covetousness. Humility is another: pride on one side, servility on the other. Magnanimity is bordered by cowardice and rashness. (2) But while virtue is moderation between opposite vices, there is no place properly speaking for moderation in virtue. No man should think of being moderately magnanimous or humble. Neither can there be any moderation in vice—moderate avarice or extravagance. (3) Yet foolish as it looks, there is a great deal of this sort of moderation, and much of what the world calls respectability is nothing else. Many a tradesman would eschew a great fraud, and yet be guilty of minor acts of dishonesty. He would not refuse to pay his creditors, but he thinks nothing of wearing down the health of his servants by overlabour. He would not lie, but he has no scruples in over or understating the truth. (4) The proper province of moderation is to regulate those powers, principles, and tendencies in man which have no evil in themselves, but which become evil by absence of restraint; *e.g.*—(a) The desire of knowledge; the cause and consequences of the first offence should teach us the need of putting a check upon it. (b) So also the desire of power. Acquisitiveness is a natural propensity. If there were no such desire, what would become of the interests of society and civilization? But there is nothing that becomes more destructive when not held in by Christian principles. 2. As to moderation in certain feelings. The other phase of meaning in the word is gentleness. It includes the control of anger. Indignation against evil is virtuous, but resentment, even against an evil doer, is the opposite. II. THE MANIFESTATION. That our moderation may be known unto all men—1. It must be decided. There must be no pressing towards the borders of excess, even though not touched. No hard driving at a bargain which would look like avarice. No such demands on servants as would look like oppression; no indulgence which would look like sensuality. 2. It must spring from principle. A man may be moderate in one thing, and not in another. An ascetic in eating and drinking,

may be licentious. A man who has no ambition may be avaricious. 3. It must be habitually exercised. How many in their religious connections profess principles which are outraged in the home or in the shop. III. THE MOTIVE. "The Lord is at hand." We tell men of the injuriousness of evil ways: as they make their bed they must lie upon it. But while forceful, it is an appeal to self-love in its lowest form, and habits formed upon it do not rise higher than mere prudence. Here is the Christian motive. 1. The judgment of the last day is approaching. This anticipation awakens an awful sense of responsibility. 2. But the Lord is an actual presence now. His judgment is passing on us at this moment; and we are now responsible. But is He not a Saviour as well as Judge? at hand to forgive the penitent and help the believer. (*J. Stoughton, D.D.*) *Christian moderation*:—The word here rendered moderation in our Bible is connected by derivation and usage with ideas not of control, but of yielding. It is rendered *Lindigkeit*, yieldingness, giving way, in Luther's German Bible; and I fully believe the interpretation to be right. "Forbearance," "gentleness," are the alternative renderings of our Revised Version, and both suggest the thought of giving way. "Let your yieldingness be known unto all men; the Lord is near." St. Paul is dealing throughout this passage with certain holy conditions necessary to an experience of "the peace of God keeping the heart and thoughts in Christ Jesus." Standing fast in the Lord, harmony and mutual helpfulness in the Lord, rejoicing in the Lord, and prayerful and thankful communion with the Lord, are among these conditions. And with them, in the midst of them, appears this also: "Let your yieldingness be known unto all men; the Lord is near." This connection with the deep peace of God throws a glory over the word and the precept. The yieldingness which is here enjoined is nothing akin to weakness, indolence, or indifference. It is a positive grace of the Spirit; it flows from the fulness of Jesus Christ. What is it? We shall find the answer partly by remembering how, from another point of view, the gospel enjoins, and knows how to impart, the most resolute unyieldingness. If anything can work the great miracle of making a weak character strong, it is the gospel. It can make the regenerate will say "no" to self on a hundred points where never anything but "yes" was heard before. Nothing in the moral world is so immovable as the will of a living Christian, sustained by the power of God the Holy Spirit, on some clear case of principle. I lately read of the uncompromising decision of a Christian man, in high military command in India, fifty years ago. He had accepted office, and £10,000 a year, being far from rich meanwhile in private means, on the condition that he should not be asked to give official countenance to idolatry. The condition was not observed. He was required to sign a grant of money to an idol temple. The East India Company would not give way, nor would their distinguished servant. He resigned his command promptly, and came home without a murmur, and without a compensation. Here, in a conspicuous case, was the unyieldingness of the gospel, a mighty grace which, thank God, is being daily exemplified in His sight in a thousand smaller instances. Yet this very case equally well illustrates from another side the yieldingness of the gospel. From the point of view of principle this admirable Christian was fixed as a rock, as a mountain: from the point of view of self-interest he was movable as air. That it was a sacrifice of self's gain and glory to resign was as nothing in his path. His interests were his Master's. Jesus Christ was in him where by nature self is. He was jealous and sensitive for the Lord; indifferent, oblivious for himself. Yieldingness, in our passage, is in fact SELFLESSNESS. It is meekness, not weakness; the attitude of a man out of whom the Lord has cast the evil spirit of self. It is a blessed thing to be a "moderate" in this sense. A living calm pervades that soul. A thousand anxieties, and a thousand regrets, incident to the life of self, are spared it. It is at leisure from itself, and therefore free for many a delightful energy and enterprise when God calls it in that direction, as well as ready for imprisonment and apparent intility when that is His will. Nothing does the world's microscope discover more keenly than selflessness in a Christian man or woman. Nothing at once baffles its experience and explanation, and attracts its notice and respect, like the genuine selflessness, the yieldingness, of the grace of God. Let ours, then, "be known unto all men"; not paraded and thrown into an attitude, but kept in practice and use in real life, where it can be put to real tests. And would we read something, in this same verse, of its heavenly secret? It lies before us: "the Lord is near." He is near, not here in the sense of coming soon, but in that of standing by; in the sense of His presence, and "the secret" of it, around His servant. The very words used

here by St. Paul occur in this connection in the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Old Testament, a translation old even in St. Paul's time: "Thou art near (*ἐγγύς*), O Lord." The thought is of the calm and overshadowing of His recollected and realized Presence; that Divine atmosphere in which bitter things, and things narrow with the contractions and distortions of self, must die, and in which all that is sweet and loving lives. "From the provoking of all men, from the strife of tongues," there is Divine protection and concealment there. St. Paul himself beautifully exemplifies his own words, in this same Epistle, in the first chapter. The "brethren" at Rome who "preached Christ of envy and strife, supposing to add affliction to his bonds," certainly took a very irritating line of action. And their action tried St. Paul. But it did not irritate him. (*H. C. G. Moule, M.A. Christian Forbearance* :—By "moderation" is meant, not temperance in the gratification of our desires generally, but specially temperance or self-restraint in our relations to others, abstinence from anger, harshness, vengeance. Elsewhere in the New Testament, where the original word occurs, the rendering is "gentleness," "clemency," "patience," any one of which is preferable to this ambiguous "moderation." The exact idea is "a considerate and forbearing spirit." The apostle would have us make allowances for the ignorance and weakness of others, knowing how much and constant need we stand in of having allowances made for ourselves, both by God and man. Taken generally, his precept here calls upon us, for example, in our business dealings, to remember that human laws, however carefully devised, may ever and anon, if rigidly enforced, act unjustly and cruelly; and to guide ourselves therefore, in every case, by the broad principles of equity in the sight of God. Similarly, in our judgment of the conduct of men, it enjoins upon us to take a kindly view, wherever this is possible, never believing evil of them until we cannot help it. In the case which seems to be at present specially before Paul's mind, that of a person who is "persecuted for righteousness' sake," he would have the sufferer to form the mildest judgment he can respecting the procedure and character of his enemy; to remember and pity the melancholy darkness of soul which prompts the persecution; and, even if he be in a position to avenge himself, to withhold his hand, and leave the matter with the Lord Jesus. When He comes, all wrongs will be righted (James v. 9). (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) The Lord is at hand.—I. PROVIDENTALLY (*Psa. cxxxix.*) II. SPIRITUALLY. "Christ in you the hope of glory." "Where two or three are gathered in My Name." III. PERSONALLY. To punish evil and to glorify His own. (*Bishop Montagu Villiers.*) The nearness of Christ :—Although corporeally Christ has left this world and is far beyond our mortal ken, yet, spiritually and essentially, He is near at hand to every man. "I am with you always." I. IN ALL THE OPERATIONS OF NATURE. "In Him all things consist." Nature is not merely His creation: it is His organ, His instrument. He is in it as the soul is in the body, animating and directing every part. He is in all seasons of the year. He flashes in the lightning. He speaks in the thunder. He is in every ray of light and every wave of air. II. IN ALL THE EVENTS OF HISTORY. In the creations of literature, the progress of science, in all the advancing steps of civilization. Every event of life is an advent of Christ. He stands at the door of our nature and knocks. He originates the good and controls the evil. III. IN ALL REDEMP-TIVE INFLUENCES. In the words of the prophets and apostles; in the ministry of His gospel; in the agency of His Spirit. Conclusion: Let us realize this: eschew evil, pursue good; be heroic in duty and magnanimous in trial. "The Lord stood by me," said Paul. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) The Lord is near :—Therefore—I. BE JOYFUL. II. BE GENTLE. III. BE TRUSTFUL. IV. BE PRAYERFUL. V. BE PEACEFUL. (*C. J. P. Eyre, M.A.*) The omnipresence of God :—I. THE DOCTRINE. The words are not applicable merely to some persons, nations, occasions, circumstances, but to all. The Lord is at hand to the pious and the profane; in places of devotion and places of commerce and pleasure. He fills all time and space (*Psa. cxxxix.*) II. THE OCCASIONS WHICH ARE SPECIALLY CALCULATED TO REMIND US OF THIS. 1. God's visitations in the death of those around us. 2. Our own advancing years. 3. The vicissitudes of the seasons. 4. The march of time towards eternity. III. THE GROUND AND SOURCE OF THE SINNER'S SAFETY. 1. Redemption in Christ. 2. Regeneration and holiness by the Spirit. 3. Divine friendship. IV. PRACTICAL EFFECTS. 1. In view of Christ's present and future nearness, men should be ready for His manifestation. 2. Diligent in duty. 3. Dead to the world. (*W. Nicholson.*) The Lord is at hand :—I. To INSPECT OUR CONDUCT. "All things are naked and open to Him," and with Him is no respect of persons (*Jer.*

xvii. 10). II. EITHER TO APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OUR CONDUCT. At this moment God is weighing us in the balance of His sanctuary. To be the object of His approbation is the highest blessing. We can then be indifferent to the world's censures. But to be condemned of Him is our heaviest curse. III. TO REGULATE THE AFFAIRS OF HIS CHURCH AND ACCOMPLISH THE PREDICTIONS OF HIS WORD. 1. To convict the sinner. 2. Edify the believer. 3. Extend His gospel. IV. TO SUMMON US TO HIS TRIBUNAL. This He does practically at death. (*Congregational Remembrancer.*) *Deliverance at hand*:—I have heard one say, as he bent over a friend who was groaning under the surgeon's knife, It will soon be over! and so Jesus, with tender fellow-feeling for their infirmities, consoles His suffering people. Amid your trials, think of that—they will soon be over; sooner, perhaps, than you fancy. Your salvation, not only nearer than when you believed, may be nearer than you suppose; even now the cry may be sounding in heaven—Room for another saint! a crown for another head! and the next turn of the road may bring you in front of the gates of glory. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Near and distant relative terms*:—"Near" and "distant" are relative terms. For the little child, whose limbs soon grow weary, the friend's house is far away, which for his father is but a step from home. So to the child, reckoning by his life, an event seems long past, far away in a hoary antiquity, which to the man on whom have come the snows of many winters, and who reckons by his life, seems to have occurred but yesterday. Now faith, in the measure of its vigour, enables us to see things in the light of God, giving us oneness of view with Him. When, then, our apostle says, "The Lord is at hand," he speaks as one who has been taught to reckon according to the years of the lifetime of the Most High—unbeginning, unending. On the same principle, you remember, in another place, he estimates the Christian's affliction—affliction extending perhaps over three-score years and ten—as "but for a moment," because the standard by which he computes is the "eternal" duration of the weight of glory" which is to follow. (*R. Johnstone, LL.B.*) "*The Lord is at hand*":—As an illustration of that, let the gay young man think of Belshazzar's feast. There is the gorgeous oriental palace, with its massive architecture, its huge columns, its gigantic figures, its pictured halls; and there are the thousand lords in their rich robes, and the king, in the pomp of an eastern despot, drinking wine before the thousand. And in the same hour there came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and they wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace; the mysterious hand moves and writes—moves and writes—and there are letters, words burnt into the wall, as with a pen of flame. The king knows not what they mean till the prophet comes to tell; and then their import is found to be, that the miserable man who wears the crown is "weighed in the balances and found wanting," and his kingdom is torn from him. So, though not visibly, yet really, there is over against the intemperate young man, the sensual young man, an omniscient Eye beholding his deeds, and an unerring Hand recording his doom, opposite him in the casino, and in other haunts of dissipation and vice. Here it is: conscience at times makes you tremble, and the minister of the gospel interprets the Divine revelation, and tells you of the wrath to come. "The Lord is at hand;" and as an illustration of that let every man of business read the parable of the rich fool, in the twelfth chapter of St. Luke, and the sixteenth verse. There you have epitomized the history of many a London tradesman: the goods are laid up, not that the soul may take its ease, but that there may be a grand funeral, and much excitement at the reading of the will, and perhaps quarrelling over the property, and a gorgeous tomb in one of the suburban cemeteries, and a scattering of the huge gold-heap by some profligate son; and the poor, careful soul who toiled and saved, and made others toil and save, who was at his books till midnight, and grudged the hours of sleep and rest to his poor shopman, where is he?—where is he? To think that men can go on as they do, digging, and delving, and scraping together money, money, money, while death is at the door, and the judgment is at hand, and hell is opening its mouth to swallow up the worldly! "The Lord is at hand." Read as an illustration of that in another way—"And being in the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and she brake the box, and poured it on His head. And Jesus said, She hath wrought a good work on Me; she hath done what she could." And so, whatever you do from love to Jesus in the way of helping men, in the way of checking sin, in the way of saving souls, in the way of lightening misery, He is at hand to notice, to record, to approve, to bless. (*J. Stoughton, D.D.*)

Vers. 6-7. Be careful for nothing.—I. THE EVIL. An incessant concern for our temporal affairs; that overthoughtfulness so pointedly condemned by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. Consider.—1. The dishonour it reflects on God as the moral Governor of the universe. It distrusts His care of His own, and the man who cannot trust the God of providence will not trust Him as the God of grace. 2. Its effects on self. Though it is certain that it can produce no good effect, yet it is indulged in, and it corrodes the mind, sours the heart, and influences the whole system. Most maniacs are produced by this, not to speak of thousands cut down in the eagerness of their worldly pursuits, destroying soul and body together. 3. Its effects on others. It excites envy. I envy in others something which my covetous heart desires. I hate the person possessing it, and am therefore a murderer in my heart. **II. THE CURE.** 1. Be careful for nothing. Retire from the world into yourself. Let the matter lie between God and you. Call not the world in as umpire. 2. Make your requests known unto God. He is your friend, able and willing to bear your burden and supply all your need. (1) In prayer: there is no other way of approaching Him, and it is only prayer which will throw off the load. (2) Prayer brings the plea, supplication urges it. God frequently delays to try your faith, and the persistence and energy of your supplication. But His name is yet Jehovah Jireh. (3) With thanksgiving, which manifests the right state of heart. (4) Without reserve. God cares for the least of His creatures as well as for the greatest. What we call little things are often of the greatest importance, either in themselves or their consequences. **III. THE EFFECT.** "The peace of God." (*J. Sumnerfield, A.M.*) **Care:—I. AN EVIL.** Anxiety is to be avoided. 1. For our own sakes. The exhortation does not discourage economy and industry, although some fanatics make it do so. The same religion which tells us to be careful for nothing tells us also to be diligent in business, and if any one under the cloak of the text becomes careless of the duties of life he denies "the faith and is worse than an infidel." Still there are some virtues which become vices. (1) Here is a man who by unstinted economy heaps up riches, and knows not who will reap them. The world promised him happiness in riches, and outside people say, "What a happy man." But look at the wrinkles on his face; he is fearful of losing his riches and is apprehensive of beggary and dies, sometimes by his own hand. (2) Here is another, careful of his good name—a good thing in itself—but the least thing said about him he feels acutely, and his peace is destroyed. The Christian's duty is clear. He must not fritter away his life in anxiety about circumstances or good name. Anxiety cumbers people as it did Martha, and is both unwise and injurious. There are trials enough without making them. The anxious man is a wholesale trouble maker. 2. Because we are not our own. This is a question which affects both conscience and honesty. God made us. What we possess is not our own. God has purchased us by the precious blood of Christ. 3. Because anxiety is distrust of God. The promises cannot be broken; however adverse the circumstances. Anxiety is thinking meanly of God. While religion allows of grief, she forbids excessive grief. It is difficult to bear with affliction, but it is cowardly to succumb. **II. A PREVENTATIVE.** Prayer is an appeal to Deity, which shows that we are not independent of Him; but it is an appeal to a Father. To be successful it must fulfil certain conditions. 1. It must be thankful—even in time of sorrow. Who of us has not something to be thankful for—food, raiment, &c. 2. It must be particular. There are some things which people think too insignificant; but who has sufficient knowledge to determine that. Has God ever rebuked you for going to Him? God cares for the sparrows, much more then for you. 3. Continual. No solitary supplication was ever forgotten. The answers will surely come, although in an unexpected way. **III. A CONSOLATION.** 1. The peace of God. We do not know how it is infused into the heart, "it passeth all understanding;" but we may all feel it if we like. 2. It is the Saviour's legacy; and nobody should be defrauded of it—"My peace." 3. Some people try to keep the peace of God instead of letting the peace of God keep them. 4. Its medium is "Christ Jesus." (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) **Peace by power and power by prayer:—I. THE MISTAKE FROM WHICH WE ARE DISSUADED.** "Be careful for nothing." 1. This does not mean that we are to be stoically indifferent, and just to take life as it comes. Such a notion would be the death of all holy manly ambition, and would mean "good for nothing." Man is not intended to be the sport of circumstances. His duties imply an earnest exercise of his powers, which is impossible without a measure of solicitude. Note the commendation which "carefulness" receives in 2 Cor. vii. 11. Were a Christian to fall into indifference

Christianity would be gone. 2. The mistake against which we are dissuaded is that of laying the mind open to the worries which are ready to invade it—the disposition condemned in Martha. St. Paul would have us rise into the calm region of faith above all fret and paralysing fear. 3. Such an exhortation is not uncalled for. Over anxiety is one of the commonest of sins. Strange that it should be so. We profess to believe that the Lord knows our sorrows, that His peace is sufficient, that He supplies all our need, and causes all things to work together for good. Surely such a belief should make us trustful, fearless, and calm. We may well cry, “Help our unbelief.” II. THE INSTRUMENTALITY FOR THE REPRESSION OF OVER ANXIETY (Psa. lxii. 8). 1. “Let your requests,” &c. True, God knows our needs before we pray; but we may, nevertheless, find relief in telling them out to Him with the confiding love of a child. Enlightened prayer does not ask for miracle or any change in the Divine will. It only implies that asking is one of the appointed conditions of receiving, that the giving of the best things that the soul craves is the sole prerogative of God. 2. “In everything.” Prayer properly belongs to the whole of our condition. Whatever touches our life is important enough to be taken to the “throne of grace.” 3. “By prayer and supplication.” The language implies entreaty. Not “vain repetitions,” not noise as if God were afar off or indifferent, but the fresh warm cry of the hungry for bread. 4. “With thanksgiving.” Prayer should be animated with gratitude. While we are with God let us think of His goodness in welcoming us, His former gracious answers, His countless undeserved and even unsought blessings. Gratitude is one of the sweetest and most useful ingredients. Whilst it honours God it disposes to that faith without which we cannot pray aright. So we come to that trust which is the antithesis of inordinate anxiety. In prayer, distrust is distraction, and distraction weakness. The prayer of faith is the natural and appointed instrumentality for the repression of over anxiety. III. THE METHOD IN WHICH THIS INSTRUMENTALITY WORKS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF THE DESIRED RESULT. Peace comes by power and power by prayer. 1. In prayer itself there is often a priceless enjoyment. 2. We obtain specific answers to prayers; not always, indeed, according to our fancies, but invariably according to God’s all-wise and perfect goodness, which is immeasurably preferable. 3. It is in the nature of prayer to soothe away unnecessary anxiety, and to sweeten such solitudes as are wholesome; for prayer takes us into the presence of God, where all is calm. (J. P. Barnett.) “Be careful for nothing”:—Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. He is launched on the storm-tossed sea of life. He is a reed which grows up to be shaken of the wind. The pleasantest paths are not without their sorrows. The rose, however sweet it is, has its thorns. What then shall we do with our sorrows? 1. It is impossible to eradicate them, for in the very resistance we find a new cause of suffering. As the fabled Hydra of old, with one head severed from his body, sprang forward with a hundred in its place, so shall our resisted troubles be. 2. It is folly to resist them; as idiotic a task as Don Quixote’s against the windmills. 3. Shall we suffer, then? We could if we were as strong as Atlas, who bore the world on his shoulders; but we are not Atlases. 4. Take them quickly, then, to the Divine Burden-bearer. This is the panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir to. I. BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING. 1. Because there are higher considerations. Here we spend no end of time and thought on things which are not worth it, and neglect matters which deserve our most earnest attention. “The life is more than meat,” and the soul than life. The doctor’s bell and knocker never seem at rest; nor are the poor patients to be blamed for their importunity; but how is it that the body casket is so cared for and the soul jewel so neglected. Men are careful even to madness about their money, but utterly careless about eternal riches. 2. Because those necessary trifles about which we are obliged to think in some degree are all seen to and arranged by God. Cast, then, “all your care upon Him; He careth for you.” 3. Because the smallest affairs of life are entirely beyond our control. Man can do a great deal—he can flash a message round the world, and through the microphone hear the footstep of a fly, but he cannot add one cubit to his stature. 4. Because nothing is too small for God to arrange for. We are ready to believe that nothing is too great for God to care for, but it is difficult for us to confide in Him in little things. But the God who made the ocean makes the dew drop, and cares for both. II. BE PRAYERFUL FOR EVERYTHING. Some mercies will come unasked for; but those are sweetest which come in answer to prayer. 1. Because of the privilege of prayer. We have not only the care but the heart of God. The blood of God’s dear Son has opened the way to the mercy-seat. 2. Because of the power of prayer. It has a soothing

effect, as we know from earthly confidences. 3. Because there is no limit to prayer. There is nothing we may not ask Him about. It is His will. "I will be enquired of." III. BE THANKFUL FOR ANYTHING. 1. Because we do not deserve anything but wrath. 2. Because ingratitude is one of the worst of sins. We are thankful for the hospitality of earthly friends, and yet though we have so much from God how thankless we are. Thankless hearts are like scentless flowers. (*Thomas Spurgeon*.) *Carefulness*.—I. ITS NATURE. The root of the original word is a verb which signifies "to divide." Such care as diverts and distracts the mind from its true and tranquil bent towards God. It is not common forethought and prudence that is forbidden. There is no warrant for carelessness, supineness, inactivity. Neither the indifference of the fatalist or of the sensualist are sanctioned here. But here is warrant for the man who believes that "all things work together for good;" that in things both great and small "the Lord will provide." 1. In disappointment—adversity where prosperity was expected—the loss of those on whom our strongest trust was reposed. 2. In the pressing claims of business or the family. 3. Relax not any reasonable and temperate exertion, but listen—"God will provide" sing the birds of the air, and whisper the lilies of the field. II. ITS CAUSES. 1. An undue value of this present world. We reverse the apostle's rule and walk by sight. 2. Practical distrust of God. The most orthodox are often guilty of this heresy. Faith in God is useless in the creed if it be absent from the heart. 3. Neglect of Christian privilege. "All things are yours." The promises are ours, but we neglect to plead and to trust them. III. ITS EVILS. 1. Its essence is worldly mindedness. Unseen and eternal things are thrown into the background. And the snare is doubly dangerous and successful from the fact that it is not viewed as a sin, but cloaked under the specious names of prudence and care for family. 2. It cramps our benevolence. It knows nothing of lending unto the Lord and giving cheerfully. It anticipates the day when what can now be spent will be wanted. It will not trust God. 3. It engenders a close illiberal spirit in all the transactions of life. It stands by its rights, drives hard bargains, exacts the uttermost farthing. "I cannot afford it." "I must not wrong my family." IV. THE REMEDY. Prayer, including blessings sought and evils deprecated ("supplication"), joined with an acknowledgment of mercies past. 1. Be it what it may it is the Christians privilege to spread it before the Lord, like Hezekiah. You have kind friends, sound advisers; but go first to God; and when before Him pour out your whole heart, and you shall find a calm and stillness in heart prayer, which shall soothe every grief and care to rest. If you do not find it all at once pray on. 2. Be thankful, *i.e.*, draw upon your experience as well as your faith; and remember that "the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save," &c. (*Canon Miller*.) *Anxiety*.—I. ITS FOLLY. What good can anxiety do? 1. It is an idle thing; the mind hovers and flutters round the subject; goes over the same ground again and again, wearies itself in vain repetitions of the same cares and fears; but what has it done? has it advanced the matter one real step? Has it arrived at one good counsel, or set itself to one wise act? 2. It is an enfeebling thing; it eats the very life out of the energies; it leaves the man not only where he was, but ten times less capable and vigorous than at the beginning. 3. It is an irritating thing; it ruffles the temper, upsets the balance of the spirit; is the sure source of moodiness, sharpness, petulance, and anger; it sets a man at war with himself, his neighbour, God's providence, and God's appointments. 4. It is a sign of mistrust, of feeble faith, of flagging energy, and languid obedience. II. ITS CURE. 1. St. Paul knew better than to attempt the correction of anxiety by human arguments. It may be useless, wrong, mischievous, but it is in us all; and let a man be sharply tried, he is anxious still. The conflict with any one of our evil tendencies is too strong for us single handed. 2. Bring in another person; introduce a new consideration; suggest a new motive. Tell us of One who amongst our other griefs has borne this, amongst our other sorrows has carried this (*Isa. liii. 4*); of One who in all our afflictions is Himself afflicted; in all our cares is Himself troubled (*Isa. lxiii. 9*); above all, of One who is not in some distant and distant world, where the sound of human groans scarcely penetrates, where the burden of human distress is regarded as unreal, but who is here, in our world, at hand, present; who both foresees and remembers with us, feels with us as well as for us, is "touched with a sense of our infirmities," yea, was Himself "tempted in all points" (*Heb. iv. 15*). Then, in His presence, in His human soul, in His compassionate heart, we will lay aside our anxieties, rest from our burdens, take refuge from our fears and from our sins. (*Dean Vaughan*.) *The prayer of faith*.—In everything make your request known unto God, and then be careful for

nothing. It is committed into God's hands, rest and rejoice. These early converts were filled with an overwhelming sense of the blessings with which their lives were crowned. They found it easier to praise than we do. **I. THE PRINCIPLE OF DELIVERANCE FROM CARE** is placed by our Lord, in the Sermon on the Mount, in a two-fold light. 1. The things about which we are tempted to be careful are "things that perish." Their worth is but for a little time, and stretches but a little way. What matters a little more or less of earthly treasure. The soul's satisfaction is independent of it. The true and enduring riches are within reach. To men who believed in and pined for the heavenly treasure, the appeal was conclusive. What matters the earthly substance which moth and rust are wasting daily, when we have a glorious treasure which defies decay and violence. They believed this and were careful for nothing. We believe less and are consumed with care. 2. This superiority to earthly things demands a keen discernment, a pure unworldly heart, which are rare. Who is sufficient for these things. The Saviour, pitying our infirmity, has another assurance to meet the needs of our trembling apprehensive natures. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." We are not alone in this great universe, whose awful order, indifferent to our needs, strikes a shivering dread into our hearts. Behind the veil a Father is watching and caring, and by His vigilant providence is adding, in the measure in which He sees we need them, all these things unto us. Be careful for nothing; rest calmly in the care of God. 3. But we can not only rest but pray. He is no unknown Friend to whom we can commend our cause and then leave it. He is here in the silent sanctuary of our hearts. Perhaps our requests are shortsighted and foolish. Be it so. The best thing that we can do is to take them to God, and lay them before Him. His light will reveal, His fire consume the sensual, selfish element in our petitions; His burning presence will purify our hearts, and make our prayers powerful with Him. Prayer is the channel of communication between the careworn soul and its helper; and it fills its desolation with the sense of a living, loving presence, which charges the very atmosphere with benediction; it quickens a pulse of joy and hope in the numbness of its despair. He who has never known what prayer can do to calm a troubled and uplift a despairing spirit is dead to the deepest, richest experience of life. **II. But it must be THE PRAYER OF FAITH.** 1. Christians complain bitterly that their prayers are not answered. But they do not understand the conditions. God nowhere binds Himself to answer our shortsighted requests. Did we see more clearly we should tremble lest He should. That would prove His heaviest chastisement. But He binds Himself to answer our prayers, in His own way. No praying soul is sent empty away. 2. The prayer of faith is the prayer which recognizes God as the supreme and perfect God. No man is in the way of blessing until he understands that in God alone can he be supremely blessed. Until he has made God his portion there is the deepest want of his being unsatisfied. This being recognized his wants fall into their true proportion. They are not extinguished, but they are no more imperative. It is no longer, Give me this or I die; it is, Give me Thyself and I live; and this, Give or withhold at Thy will. I have all, and abound in Thee. 3. The prayer of faith seeks conformity with the mind of God, without which it is idle to hope or pray for peace. Nine-tenths of our cares grow out of our mad desires for some unreal and delusive good. All cares that eat into the soul arise really from a striving against God. The first request of prayer is, "Show me Thy will, and rule my will by Thine. Root out self-will, tame passion, calm desire, bring me into harmony with Thy pure and perfect mind, and then bestow what Thou seest is for my good." When a soul has said that, its brooding cares and wearing sorrows have gone as the mists of the morning vanish in the sunlight. 4. The prayer of faith never leaves out of its account the Hand that is always working for our deliverance, and never so mightily as when the storm gathers, and the great waters seem to overwhelm. And the prayer of faith never fails. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *Prayer with thanksgiving*:—The two precepts balance each other. The first especially would be misunderstood if it stood alone. They are so connected with "but" as to exclude each other. You may have either, but you cannot have both. The careful is not prayerful; the prayerful is not careful. **I. LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD.** 1. Requests. (1) All creatures are dependent. The earth by dumb signs asks the rain from heaven to refresh its dust and make it fruitful. The air asks moisture from the ocean; the ocean from the rivers. All are needy and seek their supply from Him in whom all fulness dwells. (2) Man with the greatest capacity is distinguished by the greatest need. The child is much more dependent on its parents' care than the young of

other creatures. So the child of God's family needs much more from the Father's hand. How many times has a man of sixty breathed? How vast the supply of air, and how close to his lips? The act of breathing seems an emblem at once of the creature's continual need, and of the Creator's abundant supply. His goodness has compassed us about like the atmosphere; and when we open our mouth it is filled with good. 2. Make them known to God. (1) The lower part of our nature is supplied as God supplies that of the beasts. But God desires company among His creatures. He did not find among them any fit for this until He made man in His own image. Fathers love to supply their children's wants; inconceivably greater is God's delight. Human fathers have a defective love in their hearts and a defective supply in their hands: they sometimes will not, and sometimes cannot, give what their children require. But our Father in heaven is not limited on either side. (2) When man fell the relation was broken off. At a great price the channel was opened again. God has, through Christ, made known His fulness: we should, through Christ, make known to Him our need. 3. Your requests—your own—not what other people have asked, or what you have learned to repeat. Jesus set a little child in the midst of His disciples, and said, "Give me a child's simplicity." The wants it cries for are its own, and whether intelligible or not are real, not feigned. What element in the request of his little child goes home to the father's heart, filling it with delight and opening sluices for a flood of gifts? It is this—they are his own child's own requests. This quality, "yours," will cover a multitude of sins against grammar and other earthly laws. II. BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING. 1. Prayer. This is the soul's believing and reverential approach unto God. It is the prelude to the request and thanksgiving. The pattern prayer commences with "Our Father." The prayer and supplication follow. 2. Supplication—the specific request. The word means asking, but its radical signification is "want:" hence it came to mean a craving for supply. 3. With thanksgiving—for past favours. 4. The relation of these two elements of a soul's communion with God. (1) Supplication with thanksgiving seems to intimate that we are apt to omit this latter ingredient, and to warn us that the omission will vitiate all. To ply the asking without the song of praise seems like taking some ingredients of the physician's prescription and leaving out one. (2) The currents of grace run in circles as well as in nature—the believer draws from God a stream of benefits and returns the incense of praise. III. IN EVERYTHING. 1. Pray. At all times, in all places, about everything. Not on the Sabbath, or in church only. Our Father takes it ill if we send in our request for the pardon of sin, but ask not His counsel about the choice of a companion or an investment in trade. He is not a man of little faith who puts little things into his prayers. 2. Give thanks. There is nothing here contrary to nature. God's commandments are not grievous. You need not give thanks for suffering, but even in sorrow there is room for praise. *E.g.* (1) In the things you do not suffer—when in bodily pain that the mind is clear; or when suffering from calumny that you have a good conscience towards God; or when you have lost your money that your children survive. (2) For the good sorrow brings in fruit unto holiness. (3) But in all cases there is room for thanks in the "unspeakable Gift." (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Prayer perfumed with praise*.—1. By prayer is meant the general, and by supplication the particular act of devotion. Do not forget the second element. There is a good deal of generalizing in prayer. What we want is more definite pleading with God. When Abraham prayed he did not merely adore God but offered specific petitions, and Elijah prayed for rain there and then. 2. But whether general or specific we are to offer thanksgiving. Hence it follows—(1) That we ought always to be in a thankful condition of heart. "Thus will I bless Thee while I live." (2) That the blending of thanks with devotion is always to be maintained. Though the prayer should struggle upward out of the depths, yet must its wings be silvered o'er with thanksgiving. These two holy streams flow from a common source and should mingle as they flow; like kindred colours they shade off into each other. (3) This commingling of precious things is admirable. Prayer is myrrh, and praise is frankincense. The holy incense of the sanctuary yielded the smoke of prayer which filled the holy place, but with it was the sweet perfume of praise. Prayer and praise are like the two cherubim, they must never be separated. Note how our Lord mingles both in the model prayer, and David in the Psalms (Psa. xviii. 3). And so St. Paul (Rom. i. 8-9; Col. i. 3; 1 Thess. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 3; Phil. i. 3-4), and when he and Silas, when in the Philippian jail, they prayed and sang praises. I. THE REASONS FOR MINGLING THANKSGIVING WITH PRAYER. In the nature of things

it should be so. We do not come to God as if He had left us penniless. Thanksgiving is our right attitude towards One who daily loadeth us with benefits. You have cause for thanksgiving. 1. That such a thing as prayer is possible—that God should have commanded and encouraged it, and supplied all things necessary for its exercise—the blood-besprinkled mercy-seat, the perpetual Intercessor, the spirit of grace and supplication who helpeth our infirmities. 2. That we are spared and permitted to pray. It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed. Like David we may not be able to go up to the house of prayer, but we can still pray. The prodigal has lost his substance, but not his power to supplicate. 3. That we have already received great mercy at God's hands. If we never received another favour we have had enough for ceaseless praise. Whatever we may ask for cannot be one-half so great as what has been received. We have life in Christ; and that is more than food or raiment. If Christ is thine, He who gave thee Him will deny thee nothing. 4. That prayer has been answered so many times before. 5. That we have the mercy which we seek. We antedate our gratitude with men. Your promise to pay a man's rent when it has become due is the object of thanks before a farthing has left your pocket. Shall we not be willing to trust God a few months or years beforehand. 6. If the Lord does not answer the prayer we are offering, yet, still, He is so good, that we will bless Him whether or no. How devoutly might some of us thank Him that He did not grant the evil things we sought in the ignorance of our childish minds. We asked for flesh and He might have sent us quails in His anger. The Lord's roughest usage is only love in disguise. II. THE

EVIL OF THE ABSENCE OF THANKSGIVING. 1. We should be chargeable with ingratitude. Aristotle said, "A return is required to preserve friendship between two persons;" and if we have nothing else but gratitude let us abound therein. 2. It would argue great selfishness. Can it be right to pray for benefits and never honour our Benefactor. 3. Thanksgiving prevents prayer from becoming an exhibition of want of faith. If when I am in trouble I still bless God for all I suffer, therein my faith is seen. Is our faith such that it only sings in the sunshine? Have we no nightingale music for our God? Is our trust like the swallow, which must leave us in winter? Is our faith a flower that needs a conservatory to keep it active? Can it not blossom like geutian at the foot of the frozen glacier. 4. Not to thank God would argue wilfulness and want of submission to His will. Must everything be ordered according to our own mind? Much of the prayer of rebellious hearts is the mere growling of an angry obstinacy, the whine of an ungratified self-conceit.

III. THE RESULT OF THANKSGIVING IN CONNECTION WITH PRAYER. 1. Peace (vers. 5, 7). Some men pray, and therein they do well; but for lack of mixing thanksgiving with it they come away from the closet even more anxious than when they entered it. 2. Thanksgiving will warm the soul and enable it to pray. Do not pump up unwilling formal prayer. Take the hymn book and sing. 3. When a man begins to pray with thanksgiving he is on the eve of receiving the blessing. God's time to bless you has come when you begin to bless Him (2 Chron. xx. 20, &c.). Our thanksgiving will show that the reason for our waiting is now exhausted; that the waiting has answered its purposes, and may now come to a joyful end. When you put up a thanksgiving on the ground that God has answered your prayer, you have really prevailed with God. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *The ideal manhood*:—1. This is a command given by one of the ablest professors in the school of Christ. Different schools turn out different sorts of scholars. A military school is understood to turn out good fighting soldiers; a law school good lawyers; a medical school good doctors; a classical school good scholars; the school of Christ a certain style of manhood after the pattern of Christ. 2. Here is a man trained in this school, and now a teacher. He is a prisoner, advanced in life, most sensitive, one who had been subjected to every pain and indignity, who lived a life enough to make any one turn pale; and yet after all he had undergone he says, "Let your disposition be such that you will see how many things you have to be thankful for; and when you ask for anything do it through the radiant atmosphere of gratitude." When the pendulum swung up and Paul was in the midst of abundance he knew how to be a simple humble man; and when it swung to the other extreme and he bore chains, he said, "I have learned to be content. My manhood is more than my condition. I am master of circumstances, they are not master of me." Such was the style of manhood to be turned out in the school of Christ. 3. I am far from saying that this is easy or rapid of attainment; but I do say that such is the ideal portraiture of Christianity in the school of Christ. His school is like every other in that there is a difference of apprehensiveness in

the scholars; but from the lowest to the highest there is this ideal set before them which they are to strive after—to give power to the inward man, to overcome appetites and passions, to endure troubles of every kind, and not stoically but rejoicingly, to have a hope that quenches fear, faith that annihilates doubt, endurance that can bear as much as God lays on. Not every man that comes from the university is a perfect scholar, but there is a bright ideal held up, and if the scholar does not approximate to it in a measure it is not the fault of the university but his own. 4. Can this ideal of Christianity ever be set aside? We live in a sceptical age, but a thing that has happened is a fact; and nothing can make it not to have happened; and since religion discloses what it is to live in Christ Jesus, and lifts up the conception of our higher being in its developed state, we are not going to lose it out of the world. There is nothing so powerful as a soul brought under such inspiration as St. Paul's, and no scepticism will ever sweep it away. If you can live as Paul lived, and as thousands of Christians have lived, by other than Christian instrumentalities, then you are bound to show what they are, and where they are to be found. 5. If Paul's conception of the Christian life be true then every other is false—the ascetic view, *e.g.*, pain, self-denial, of course, come, but with them come a spirit that welcomes the pain and turns the cross into a benediction. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Be careful for nothing*:—The Christian is not half saved. God does not pay half his debts for him, and leave him to work off the rest. (*Harry Jones, M.A.*) *Casting care on God*:—Bulstrode Whitelocke, Cromwell's envoy to Sweden, was one night so disturbed in mind over the state of his nation that he could not sleep. His servant observing it said, "Pray, sir, will you give me leave to ask you a question?" "Certainly."—"Do you think that God governed the world very well before you came into it?" "Certainly."—"Then, pray, sir, excuse me, do you not think that you may trust Him to govern it as long as you live?" No answer could be given, and composure and sleep followed. (*J. L. Nye.*) *Preaching and practice*:—Not many weeks before his death, Dr. William Arnot came on this verse in the course of expounding the Epistle to the Philippians. He gave a short summary of it, which he had found somewhere, and thought well worth preserving: "Be careful for nothing. Be prayerful for everything. Be thankful for anything." A little child some time afterwards, overhearing his father speaking with anxiety about business, quoted these words, saying: "Do you remember what Mr. Arnot told us?" *Trusting God in little things*:—He is not a man of little faith who puts little things into his prayer. That very thing shows him to be a man of great faith. A feeble pulsation in the heart may keep the life-blood circulating for a while near the centre and in the vitals; but it requires a great strong life in the heart to send the blood down into the tips of the fingers, and make it circulate through the outmost, smallest branches of the veins. In like manner, it is the strongest spiritual life that animates the whole course, even to the minutest transactions, and brings to God the smallest matters of our personal history as well as the great concern of pardon and eternal life. "Every thing:" whatever is a thing to you, whatever lodges about your heart, either as a joy that you cherish or a grief that you are unable to shake away—in with it into your prayer, up with it to the throne. It is not right to choose, out of the multitude of thoughts within you, all the grave and goodly, and marshal them by themselves into a prayer. This is like one who had wheat to sell, and sat down and picked out all the full and plump seeds and brought them to market, while the heap was half made up of shrivelled, unripened grains. Prayer in secret, is a pouring out of the soul before God; and if it is not a pouring, it is not prayer. Anything left behind, cherished in you but concealed from God, vitiates all—takes away the comfort from you, and hinders the answer from God. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Trust in God the secret of happiness*:—There was once a poor coloured woman who earned a precarious living by daily labour, but who was a joyous, triumphant Christian. "Ah, Nancy," said a gloomy Christian lady one day, who almost disapproved of her constant cheerfulness, and yet envied it—"Ah, Nancy, it is well enough to be happy now; but I should think that the thoughts of your future would sober you. Only suppose, *e.g.*, you should have a spell of sickness, and be unable to work; or suppose your present employers should move away, and no one else should give you anything to do; or suppose"—"Stop!" cried Nancy, "I never suppose. De Lord is my Shepherd, and I know I shall not want. And, honey," she added, to her gloomy friend, "its all dem supposes as is making you so miserable. You'd better give them all up, and just trust the Lord." *A short line best*:—Walk through to-day as well as you can, and God will undertake for your future. When

you go forward out of to-day, to worry about it, you are over the fence, you are trespassing, and God will scourge you back into your own lot. When I have been fishing in a mountain stream, I have always found that so long as I kept a short line I could manage my fishing very well; but when I let my line run out, the stream took it down, and there I was, at the mercy of every stick that stuck up in the stream, and every rock that jutted out from the banks. I lost my fish, and I tangled my line; very likely I lost my footing also, and got over head and ears in the stream. Now, most men have cast out their line into life forty years long, when it ought to be but one day long. In consequence, they are not able to manage their tackle at all; but are pulled after it, stumbling first into this hole, and then into that; slipping up here, and slipping down there; struggling and splashing about in far more distressed fashion than the fish at the other end of the line—and, as a general thing, there is no fish there. Haul in your line! (H. W. Beecher.)

We may pray always:—In the vestibule of St. Peter's, at Rome, is a doorway which is walled up and marked with a cross. It is opened but four times in a century; on Christmas-eve, once in twenty-five years, the Pope approaches it in princely state, with the retinue of cardinals in attendance, and begins the demolition of the door, by striking it thrice with a silver hammer. When the passage is opened the multitude pass into the nave of the cathedral and up to the altar by an avenue which the majority of them never entered thus before, and never will enter thus again. Imagine that the way to the throne of grace were like the Porta Santa, inaccessible save once in a quarter of a century, on the 25th of December! With what solicitude we should wait for the coming of the holy day! It would make us fear we should die before that year of jubilee. How many years, or months, or weeks now to the time of prayer we should be constantly asking ourselves! *Pray about little things:*—Little cares should be brought to the Lord. Some persons, however, will bring their great cares to Him, but not their little cares. But this is foolish. It is the little cares of life that wear the heart out. One of the most cruel torments of the Inquisition was to place the poor victim beneath a trap, and let the cold water fall upon the head drop by drop. This was not felt at first, but at last the monotony of the water dropping always on one spot became almost unendurable; the agony was too great to be expressed. It is just so with little cares. When they keep constantly falling drop by drop upon one individual they tend to produce irritation, calculated to make life well-nigh insupportable. To prevent this, then, God would have us take our little trials to Him as well as our great trials, and that, too, because we often bear up more bravely under the great and faint under the lesser. *Universal prayer:*—Do not keep prayer for grand and difficult occasions, and think that you can manage well enough by yourself in little, trifling things. Without God you can do nothing well, not the smallest. Get into the habit of looking and referring everything to Him. Just as the cautious shopman rings every coin upon his counter to see if it be true, the penny as well as the pound, so do you try all that you do by the test of God. Nothing is too common to be brought before Him who made the earthworm as well as the archangel. Nothing is too frequent for Him who regulates the pulse of the slave who sweats in the field, and the long-stretched career of the planets which sail in space. You cannot appeal to Him too often. He is never tired, of whom it may always be said, "He worketh hitherto." (Harry Jones, M.A.) *The cares of life not to be unduly anticipated:*—A person says, "I cannot understand how I am to get along when I leave my father's house." Why should you see it till that time comes? What if a person going on a journey of five years should undertake to carry provisions, and clothes, and gold enough to last him during the whole time, lugging them as he travelled, like a veritable Englishman, with all creation at his back! If he is wise he will supply himself at the different points where he stops. When he gets to London, let him buy what he needs there; when he gets to Paris, let him buy what he needs there; when he gets to Rome, let him buy what he needs there; and when he gets to Vienna, Dresden, Munich, St. Petersburg, and Canton, let him buy what he needs at these places! He will find at each of them, and all the other cities which he visits, whatever things he requires. Why, then, should he undertake to carry them around the globe with him? It would be the greatest folly imaginable. As to gold, why should he load his pockets with that? Let him take a circular letter of credit, which is good, yet not usable till he arrives at the places where he needs it. When he gets to London, let him present it to Baring Brothers; when he gets to Paris, let him

present it to the Rothschilds. And as he proceeds, let him place it in the hands of the bankers of the various places at which he stops; and he will get the means for prosecuting his journey. Now, God gives every believer a circular letter of credit for life, and says, "Whenever you get to a place where you need assistance, take your letter to the Banker, and the needed assistance will be given you. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Prayer with thanksgiving*:—The currents of grace, like those of nature, run in circles. Take the case of ventilation. A tube divided longitudinally into two, or two tubes joined together, stretch from the interior of a building through the roof into the air. The air flows up through one lobe of the tube out of the building, and down through the other lobe into the building. When the process is set agoing, it continues. But if you stop the ascending current, you thereby also make the descending current cease; and if you stop the descending current, the ascending one is arrested, too. Ten lepers came to Christ with prayer and supplication. He gave them their request. But only one of the ten put in his request with thanksgiving; only one continued the circle and answered the getting of mercy by the giving of praise. The Lord marked and mentioned the omission. He felt well pleased with the circle of communion completed in the one who returned to give thanks; but He left on record for all ages His disappointment with those who greedily snatched the gift and forgot the Giver: "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" When there is spiritual life, the weight of God's mercies pressing down forces the sacrifice of thanksgiving up. The pressure of the air does not make the heavy, sluggish water rise; whatever weight of air may press upon it, the water lies heavy in its bed. But when water is etherealized into vapour, then the weight of the air makes the vapour rise. The load of benefits that pressed on the nine lepers, finding their souls dull and dead, did not move them upwards; but the same load on the one Samaritan, finding him spiritually quickened, pressed his thanksgiving up to the Throne. The circulations of the ocean constitute a plain and permanent picture of these relations between a human soul and a redeeming God. The sea is always drawing what it needs down to itself, and also always sending up of its abundance into the heavens. It is always getting, and always giving. So, when in the covenant the true relation has been constituted, the redeemed one gets and gives, gives and gets; draws from God a stream of benefits, sends up to God the incense of praise. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Thanksgiving the ornament of prayer*:—Let your prayers be like those ancient missals which one sometimes sees, in which the initial letters of the prayers are gilded and adorned with a profusion of colours, the work of cunning writers. Let even the general confession of sin and the Litany of mournful petitions have at least one illuminated letter. Illuminate your prayers; light them up with rays of thanksgiving all the way through; and when you come together to pray forget not to make melody unto the Lord with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Submission involved in prayer and thanksgiving*:—To refuse to praise unless we have our own way is great presumption, and shows that like a naughty child we will sulk if we cannot be master. I might illustrate the wilfulness of many a supplication by that of a little boy who was very diligent in saying his prayers, but was at the same time disobedient, ill-tempered, and the pest of the house. His mother told him that she thought it was mere hypocrisy for him to pretend to pray. He replied, "No, mother, indeed it is not, for I pray God to lead you and father to like my ways better than you do." Numbers of people want the Lord to like their ways better, but they do not intend to follow the ways of the Lord. Their minds are contrary to God and will not submit to His will, and therefore there is no thanksgiving in them. Praise in a prayer is indicative of a humble, submissive, obedient spirit, and when it is absent we may suspect wilfulness and self-seeking. (*Ibid.*) *Prevalence of thanksgiving*:—Suppose you had promised to some poor woman that you would give her a meal to-morrow. You might forget it, you know; but suppose when the morning came she sent her little girl with a basket for it, she would be likely to get it, I think. But, suppose that she sent in addition a little note, in which the poor soul thanked you for your great kindness, could you have the heart to say, "My dear girl, I cannot attend to you to-day. Come another time"? Oh dear no; if the cupboard was bare you would send out to get something, because the good soul so believed in you that she had sent you thanks for it before she received your gift. Well, now, trust the Lord in the same manner. He cannot run back from His word, my brethren. Believing prayer holds Him, but believing thanksgiving binds Him. (*Ibid.*) *Day of thanksgiving*:—Dr. Franklin says that

in a time of great despondency among the first settlers of New England, it was proposed in one of their public assemblies to proclaim a fast. An old farmer arose, spoke of their provoking heaven with their complaints, reviewed their mercies, showed that they had much to be thankful for, and moved that instead of appointing a day of fasting, they should appoint a day of thanksgiving. This was done, and the custom continued ever after. (*J. L. Nye.*)

Ver. 7. The peace of God which passeth all understanding. *God's peace*:—I. THE PRICELESS LEGACY—Christ left peace with His followers as His last and best gift. "Peace I leave with you," &c. The apostle in speaking of it gives us two descriptive particulars. He calls it—1. The peace of God. No one else can give peace. No one else could ensure peace. No one else could possess peace. 2. Which passeth all understanding. The worldling cannot understand it. The Christian cannot understand it. Angels cannot understand it. It is so far removed from all that is material and sensible. II. THE MIGHTY EFFECTS—"Shall keep your hearts and minds." Here is a power more mighty than the universe. Silence is sometimes more powerful than speech; love is more mighty than rage. So peace is more powerful than storm. 1. It keeps the heart from fear. There can be no fear of man, no fear of the world, no fear of death, no fear of hell in the heart where dwells the peace of God. 2. It keeps the heart from ambition. Ambition is the chief cause of trouble. He who has the peace of God has every ambition satisfied. He desires nothing else. 3. It keeps the heart from strife. There can be no contention where there is peace. 4. It keeps the mind from doubt. Probably by mind the apostle means the intellect as distinguished from the affections. The man who has no doubts is fixed on a rock. Even the poorest, the meanest, the most illiterate can enjoy the trust. III. THE BLESSED MEANS—"Through Christ Jesus." Christ is the medium through which the possibility of peace came at first. Christ is the channel through which it flows at present. He is the propitiation for sins; therefore He brings peace to the conscience. He is the power of God; therefore He brings peace to those who are weak and in fear. He is the path to heaven; therefore He brings confidence to those who are pilgrims. He is the Prince of Peace; therefore He is the delight of all His subjects. (*J. J. S. Bird, M.A.*) *The peace of God*:—I. AN UNSPEAKABLE PRIVILEGE. 1. It is peace with God. Reconciliation there must be, and the soul must be aware of it. A man conscious of being guilty can never know it till he becomes equally conscious of being forgiven. Your sin was the ground of the quarrel, but it is cast into the depths of the sea. There is nothing now that can cause the anger of God towards us. We are accepted in the Beloved, and thus have a profound sense of peace. 2. A consequent peace in the little kingdom within. By nature everything in our inner nature is at war with itself. The passions, instead of being curbed by the reason, often holds the reins; and reason, instead of being guided by Divine knowledge, chooses to obey a depraved imagination, and demands to become a separate power and to judge God Himself. There is no cure for this but restoring grace. The King must occupy the throne, and then the state of Mansoul will be settled. 3. A peace in reference to outward circumstances. The man who is reconciled to God by Christ has nothing outside him that he needs fear. Is he poor? He rejoices that Christ makes poor men rich. Does he prosper? He rejoices that there is grace which prevents his prosperity intoxicating him. Is he in trouble? He thanks God for the promise that as His day so his strength shall be. In death the hope of the resurrection gives peace to his pillow; and as for judgment, he knows whom he has believed and knows who will protect him in that day. Whatever may be suggested to distress him, deep down in his soul he cannot be disturbed, because he sees God at the helm of the vessel holding the rudder with a hand that defies the storm. 4. God gives peace in reference to all His commands. The unregenerate soul rebels, but when the change takes place we drop into the same line with God; His will becomes our delight and His statutes our songs. 5. We feel peace with regard to God's providential dealings, because we believe that they are helping us to arrive at conformity with Him. 6. It is a peace which "passeth all understanding." Not only beyond common, or the sinners, but all—deeper, broader, more heavenly than even the joyful saint can tell. (1) There are kinds of peace which we can understand. (a) The peace of apathy, to which the Stoics schooled themselves. Their secret is easily discovered. Christianity is not this; it cultivates tenderness, not insensibility, and gives us a peace consistent with the utmost delicacy of feeling. (b) The peace of levity, which is perfectly understood.

(2) The Christian is often surprised at his own peacefulness. There is a possibility of having the surface of the mind lashed into storm, while yet, deep down, all is still. There are earthquakes, yet the earth pursues the even tenour of its way. It surpasses understanding, but not experience. II. **HOW THIS PEACE IS TO BE OBTAINED.** Christians are always at peace with God, but are not always sensible of it. If you wish to realize it hear Paul. (1) Rejoice in the Lord always; make God your joy, and place all your joy in Him. You cannot rejoice in yourself, nor in your varying circumstances, but God never changes. 2. Let your moderation be known unto all men. Deal cautiously with earthly things. If any man praises don't exult; if you are censured don't despond. Take matters quietly. 3. Be careful for nothing. Leave your care with God. 4. Pray about everything. That which we pray over will have the sting taken out of it if it be evil, and the sweetness of it will be sanctified if it be good. 5. Be thankful for anything. Thankfulness is the mother and nurse of restfulness. Neglected praises sour into inquiet forebodings. III. **THE OPERATION OF THIS BLESSED PRIVILEGE ON OUR HEARTS AND MINDS.** 1. Our hearts want keeping—(1) From sinking, for they are very apt to faint even under small trials. (2) From wandering, for how soon are they beguiled? A quiet spirit will neither sink nor wander. Like the life-buoy, it will rise above the billows and keep its place. 2. Our minds want keeping. In all ages the minds of Christians have been apt to be disturbed on vital truths. But these truths are known to consciousness, and having brought peace to the mind, keep it in perfect peace. IV. **THE SPHERE OF ITS ACTION**—"In Christ Jesus." There is no peace out of Him. He is our peace. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *The peace of God*:—This is not a wish or prayer, like the benediction of 2 Thess. iii. 16; nor a precept like Col. iii. 15; but is one of the exceeding great and precious promises. The world is weary for peace; the army after a long campaign, the country bearing the burden of a protracted war, longs for peace; but not more earnestly than men tossed on the waves of this troublesome world. This blessing is for the spirit satiated with the vain pleasures of the world; for the spirit tried with sorrow; for the Pharisee tormented with the incumbrances of his over-righteousness; for the publican standing on the threshold. I. **ITS SOURCE.** 1. It originates with Him. Man by sin has placed himself in antagonism to God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The transgression and enmity were ours, yet God devised means whereby the banished might be restored, and sends to rebels the ambassadors of peace. It was not from man the sinner that the overtures were made. 2. It has reference to Him. It is not only peace from, but with, God. The ambassadors are sent to proclaim that God has devised the means, has made peace. It is no imaginary reconciliation; it is a peace wrought by real means, purchased at a real price—the blood of the Son of God (Col. ii. 14). And when the sentence of condemnation is blotted out there is no condemnation to those who believe (Rom. v. 1; viii. 1). This act is the foundation of all peace in the heart. It is a peace which the world can neither give nor take away. II. **ITS CHARACTER.** It passeth understanding because—1. Man unaided cannot attain to it. There are many voices which cry to man of pleasure and rest. But they are delusive. "Peace," they cry, when there is no peace. Wherever sin is there is unrest. There is no peace to the wicked. They "are like the troubled sea which cannot rest," continually straining after some haven of repose, but only to be cast back by the waves of passion. And not only cannot the sinner, unaided, attain this peace; he cannot, unaided, even receive it when provided for him. The things which belong to his peace are hidden from him. But this does not make void his responsibility. God hath revealed it by His Spirit, whom He gives to those who ask for Him. 2. There are depths in it which the richest Christian experience cannot fathom. There are mysteries in grace as well as in nature and providence. The source of this peace is God, and its guarantee the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. All the gifts of God are inexhaustible. III. **ITS EFFECT**—"Shall guard." Our hearts and minds are in need of continual guardianship, and where shall we meet with one more reliable? 1. It can keep our hearts. We understand by the heart the source of the affections and passions; but not unfrequently the inspired writers use the word to signify the affections and understanding acting together. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." The affections are apt to stray from their centre. There is a fatal affinity between the evil within and the evil without. "Keep thy heart with all diligence," &c. It needs a strong power to watch over it, but the peace of God is equal to this. There is a strength in it to stay your stray reflections; for it gives you in your heart

something on which your love may centre. The lustre of the ball-room and the gaudy trappings of the stage looks tawdry in the daylight; and the loves of the earth look tinsel indeed in the light of a Saviour's love and the brightness of the peace of God. 2. The mind. That is prone to be carried off by merely speculative problems. The peace of God keeps the mind not by enslaving its faculties or starving their energy, but by rightly balancing them. By giving us a clear conception of the relative values of things temporal and eternal, by revealing the due order which presides over all God's works, we are taught to estimate aright the true value of speculative and practical problems. 3. Both the heart and mind are kept. In some natures the thinking faculty is the most active: such are in danger of neglecting the keeping of the heart—the spirit of devotion. Others are exposed to the reverse temptation. To neglect either is injurious. Let us give to each its sustenance; storing our minds with Divine truth and yet increasing in love and grace. IV. THE CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH IT COMES. There is no blessing which comes not through Him—in nature, Providence, salvation. He is our peace. (*Bp. W. Boyd Carpenter.*) *The peace of God:*—By this the apostle does not mean the blessedness which belongs to the Divine Nature, nor the rest that is laid up for us in heaven: but the deep inward repose of the spiritual life, Divine in its origin, religious in its nature, holy in its impulses, heavenly in its results. I. “BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD” (Rom. v. 1). Man is contemplated as a sinner, conscious of guilt, exposed to punishment, and who cannot be justified by law, which has nothing to do but to condemn him. Let this idea be distinctly realized, and it is seen at once that it has power to terribly agitate the soul. The apostle meets the case by a proclamation of mercy, not indeed the tender and benevolent Divine affection to which the guilty and miserable may appeal, but something embodied in a supernatural fact to be apprehended and confided in: “God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood”—that as man could not be justified by law through obedience, he might be through grace by faith. This we have received who have trusted in Christ. “There is now no condemnation,” &c.; the terrors of conscience are stilled; we have “joy and peace through believing.” “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked,” but there is peace when he forsakes his evil way and turns to the Lord. The prophet was agitated by the revelation of the glory of the Divine nature and the corruption of his own (Isa. vi.), but he was tranquilized when a live coal from the altar of sacrifice was laid upon his mouth. No angelic voice or vision is to be expected now, but there may be such a certainty of the truth of the gospel, such a perception of its appropriateness, and such a realization of peace, that the penitent and believing man may be able neither to doubt the fact of his forgiveness, nor to resist the feeling of deep calm blessedness, which the persuasion of it brings. II. “TO BE SPIRITUALLY MINDED IS LIFE AND PEACE” (Rom. viii. 6), a passage taken from Paul's discourse on the work of the Spirit in man as the former was taken from that on the work of Christ for man. By being spiritually minded the apostle means that the man who has obtained forgiveness through Christ, in virtue of the agency of the Spirit of God has his moral tastes so rectified, his moral affections so cleansed and elevated, that he loves all spiritual things and exercises. Man was made for God. His powers and affections were so constituted that they were to find their supreme enjoyment in Him. Sin has disturbed this original law and given to the flesh an unnatural ascendancy, and so is productive of misery and misrule. The consequence is that to the idea of antagonism between the sinner and God, there is the idea of antagonism to himself. Spiritual renovation restores the natural order of things, reason is enlightened, affections purified, passion restrained, the animal is brought into subjection to the man, and the man bound by love and loyalty to God. III. “GREAT PEACE HAVE THEY WHO LOVE THY LAW.” “The work of righteousness is peace.” These and other passages lead us to the correspondence of the Christian's outward conduct with the instincts and principles of his inward life. That condition of heart described as “minding the things of the Spirit” is to find appropriate embodiment in the maintenance of a uniform and elevated morality. It is only by a course of practical obedience that peace of conscience can be preserved. Inconsistency cannot but disturb inward peace. Guilt is a thing full of fears. The secret of Paul's peace was—“herein do I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence.” IV. “THOU WILT KEEP HIM IN PERFECT PEACE WHOSE MIND IS STAYED UPON THEE” (Isa. xxvi. 3). Filial trust in God is everything that belongs to the circumstances of life. There is “a thought for the morrow” which is proper and becoming, but there is also a care that hath torment, a fear

that is sinful. A Christian man who realizes that all his "times are in God's hands," that "He fixes the bounds of his habitation," and "perfects that which concerns him," that his Heavenly Father knoweth what he has need of; that "all things work together for good;" he who thoroughly believes all this, and casts his care, and stays his soul on God, cannot but be saved from the perturbations and anxieties which torment the worldly mind. He is kept from murmuring at what God does, from petulance at what He does not. He can confide and wait, and believe and be thankful, suffer and be satisfied. (*T. Binney, LL.D.*)

The Divine peace :—I. THE PEACE OF GOD. It is so called—1. Because it is that for which God made man at first—the realization of His original idea of the happiness of humanity. It springs from intercourse with God, filial trust, devotional communion, loving obedience, apprehension of spiritual truth, just and regulated affections, perfect repose in God's Fatherhood, and conscious complacency in everything that pleases Him. These things are such as would have entered into the happiness of man had he never sinned; many of them, of course, enter into that of the angels.

2. Because it is the result of His merciful interposition for man as well as the realization of His original plan. Something has been done to produce it beyond the original constitution of things, and the result of this interposition in human experience must be of a nature different from and additional to, the blessedness that would have belonged to humanity had it only realized that for which it was made. It is God's peace because it is by God's grace that it is possible, by the gift of His Son that it is procured, by the application of His truth that it is produced. It consists of forgiveness of sin, peace of conscience, deliverance from wrath, which man, had he continued upright, would not have needed.

3. Because it is that which is immediately produced by God's Spirit, and is thus a direct Divine donation. When Christ was about to leave His sorrowing disciples He promised that He would send them "another comforter," and then He adds, as if interpreting His meaning, "Peace I leave with you," &c. And so "the fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace." "May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

4. Because it is sustained and nourished by those acts which bring the soul in contact with God—meditation on His truth, trust in His promises, prayer and praise, song and sacrament.

II. IT PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING. There is nothing unphilosophical in this. Mystery surrounds us. We are incessantly met with ultimate facts whose being and agency we are bound to admit, but which none of us can understand. In the natural laws of the mind, in things connected with our own consciousness, there are matters about which we can only say that they are. Surely, then, it is not wonderful that this should be so in religious life. His peace—1. Passes the understanding of the man of the world. The very terms and phrases by which it is expressed are "foolishness" unto them, or repugnant, or unintelligible. In listening to the sober statements of a Christian man, if restrained by courtesy, they are silent, but incredulous and perhaps pitiful: if not restrained they reject the whole thing with contempt as cant or jargon. Nor is this wonderful. Many things connected with art, taste, science, and philosophy, can be understood only through the medium of experience. And so to him who is destitute of religious experience, the very language of religion must be incomprehensible.

2. It passes the understanding of the Christian himself. (1) Light sometimes gushes into the intellect, filling it with clear apprehensions of truth, and an impression of its power in a manner perfectly inexplicable. The man, all on a sudden, is filled with joy and peace from seeing matters of faith after he had been toiling in doubt and darkness, and was just on the point of abandoning for ever. (2) In the same way the burden of guilt has been lifted, the troubled conscience calmed. The blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven has come like an angel of God. (3) It has been thus, too, with taste and affection; by a sudden transition, the reckless and impure have become like unto a little child. (4) So, too, in things of great and terrible afflictions. Christians have been kept in such calm peace as has been a perfect amazement to themselves. (5) And so, too, in the ordinary course of the Christian life.

3. It passes the understanding of angels. The inward joys of hope and faith are associated with redemption and "into these things angels desire to look."

III. IT KEEPS THE HEART AND MIND. The word is used only in three other places, 2 Cor. xi. 32, where the words "with a garrison" are included in the word that stands for "kept;" Gal. iii. 23, where we have the idea of a sort of strong-room, or protected custody; 1 Pet. i. 5, where it is "preserved as in a fortress." The general import of the statement is that the experience of religious life is the most

powerful preservative of the happiness and virtue of man. Trouble and sin by the peace of God are cast out of the soul and kept out. "Heart and mind," however discriminated, include every faculty of the inner man. 1. Suppose an attack be made on a man's belief, and dark clouds of doubt overspread the mind, I do not say that he need not go to his books and arguments, but I do say that the portable evidence of Christianity in his own experience of its power will often do more to reveal the hollowness of sceptical suggestions than all the learning of the schools. Nay, the peace of God as a felt possession will prevent the rising and entrance of the doubt itself, or will instantly repel it. 2. If the memory of his old sins comes to disturb the tranquillity of his conscience he will, of course, be humbled at the thought of this; but the counter recollection of the peace and joy he had in believing will prove a protection from what would break his peace. And here again the possession of peace will prevent the rising or entrance of that into the soul which would throw it back again on hopelessness and despair. "I know whom I have believed," "I will trust and not be afraid." 3. In like manner the peace of God will "guard" the heart against murmuring and anxiety, fear and distrust in relation to the affairs of life. "Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice." 4. It is a preservative, strong and sure, against all sin. The religiously happy are the morally strong. Duty is pleasant because the mind is in joyous harmony with God's requirements. (1) It keeps the heart by keeping its volatile affections, not permitting them to go forth to twine themselves round anything forbidden. (2) Sin is resisted from the knowledge that it will damage the peace of the soul. (3) When this peace dilates the soul it is not easy for the devil to put in a temptation. A rich man cannot be tempted to steal; a sober man is not tempted by the sight of a tavern. So with the spiritually happy man; what might overcome others is nothing to him. He is raised above them, and the peace of God shields him from their influence. IV. THROUGH CHRIST JESUS. He is the object of faith and the sole medium of spiritual influence. In virtue of His work on earth we obtain peace at first; and if, as justified, any man sin, it is by His work in heaven that peace is restored. (*T. Binney, LL.D.*) *The peace of God keeping the heart*:—We all need something to keep our hearts. The changes of the world effect not only our homes and outward comforts, but our inmost souls. And more, our hearts are naturally restless. The result is that even in a calm our minds are shifting. It is plain we need something to steady us. Where shall we find it? Plainly not in this world; as well seek it in the hurricane. Not in ourselves, there there is only misery. The text shows us the blessing that we need. I. ITS NATURE. Not self-denial, exertion, or watchfulness, but peace; enjoyment and repose in enjoyment. A calm which not only quiets the soul amid the tumult of the storm, but keeps it quiet. But "there is no peace to the wicked." They are like "a troubled sea when it cannot rest." This peace is the result of a change in man's state and character; the effect of a reconciliation between him and heaven. When this transpires man can look on God as his Friend, expect victory in temptation, a refuge in perils, strength in weakness, comfort in affliction, safety in death, heaven, and, in heaven, God. II. ITS AUTHOR—God. 1. The work of saving mercy on which it rests is only His. He provides mercy and induces its acceptance. 2. He communicates that peace which flows from a sense of pardon. This is not the result of reasoning or self-examination, it is the gift of that God who fills us "with all joy and peace in believing." III. ONE OF ITS PROPERTIES. A peace thus Divine in its origin must partake in some degree of the lofty nature of its Author, and in that degree must be incomprehensible. 1. It passes the understanding of those who are strangers to it. They who have not experienced it can know nothing of its character. Not that it is visionary or enthusiastic—nothing can be so rational and real; there is no other that will bear any serious reflection at all. And this peculiarity is not confined to this or any other spiritual blessing. The man of intellect may talk of the delight he experiences in the acquisition of knowledge, but his words convey no distinct idea to his ignorant neighbour. Tell a deaf man of the harmonies of music, or a blind man of the beauty of the world! 2. Those who enjoy it most cannot fully comprehend it. They are sensible of it, and find their hearts quieted and purified by it; but how did it come into the heart? Why is it at times so unspeakably sweet and strong? All they can say is, it "passeth understanding," and perhaps an inhabitant of heaven cannot say more. We may all, however, comprehend its effects. IV. ONE OF THESE EFFECTS. 1. It keeps the heart. (1) In temptation by satisfying it. It triumphs over the pleasures of sense by communicating higher pleasures. (2) In

affliction. It is a pledge of the special love of God to the soul, and as such it begets confidence in Him. Let a worldly man lose his earthly comforts and he has lost all; but let a man of God lose what he may his chief treasure is safe. 2. It keeps the mind. (1) It settles the judgment, and informs and elevates the understanding by showing it, in the light of spiritual blessedness, the measure and poverty of all temporal good. (2) It keeps the mind from folly, new and strange notions, sceptical doubt and error. The man who has it has "the witness in himself." Tell him that the Bible is not true, his religion a fable! You might as well tell him in the broad light of day that there is no sun. V. ITS SOURCE AND INSTRUMENTALITY. The apostle had been inculcating freedom from anxiety and care; but lest the Philippians should seek in this the fountain of their peace he here adds "in Christ Jesus." This peace has God for its author and giver, but it flows, to us through His Son. 1. It is one of the blessed fruits of His obedience, sufferings, and intercession. 2. It dwells also in Him as the head of the Church, the royal treasury of all precious gifts. 3. It is dispersed by Him through the agency of the Spirit. (C. Bradley, M.A.) *How to keep the heart:*—Inasmuch as the heart is the most important part of a man—for out of it are the issues of life—it is natural that it should be the object of Satan's perpetual attacks. I. THAT WHICH KEEPS THE HEART AND MIND. 1. The peace of God, the peace existing between the child of God and his Judge through his Saviour, from whence flows peace of conscience. 2. This peace passeth all understanding. (1) See how it keeps those who are in the depth of poverty while many rich are distracted. (2) The bereaved, when those who have not suffered are gnawed with fear. (3) The confessors, Luther, Huss, Bradford—while popes and kings tremble. II. HOW IS THIS PEACE TO BE OBTAINED. This promise has precepts (see ver. 4). 1. Rejoice evermore. The man who never rejoices is always murmuring. Cultivate a cheerful disposition. 2. Be moderate. Merchant, you cannot push that speculation too far, and have peace of mind. Young man, you cannot be trying so fast to rise in the world, and have the fear of God. You must be moderate in anger, in expectations, &c. 3. Be careful for nothing, &c. If you tell your troubles to God you put them into the grave. If you roll them anywhere else they will roll back again like the stone of Sisyphus. Cast your troubles where you have cast your sins, into the depths of the sea. III. HOW THIS PEACE KEEPS THE HEART. 1. It keeps the heart full of that love which casteth out all fear. 2. It keeps the heart pure, without the least relish for sin, which is the soul's disturbance. 2. It keeps it undivided, and thus saves it from distraction. 4. It keeps it rich, and thus renders it secure from anxiety. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Characteristics of peace:*—It is—1. Real; not the delusive calm of a hollow truce, nor the deceitful tranquillity of stolid indifference and thoughtless apathy. An ice-bound river is at peace; a motionless corpse. In true peace there is life and activity as well as rest. 2. Great (Psa. cxix. 165; Isa. liv. 13) in its foundation, author, effect. 3. Abundant (Jer. xxxiii. 6), flowing in many channels, and filling the heart (Rom. xv. 13). 4. Abiding; secure and certain, a peace that lives independently of circumstances, "which the world can neither give nor take away," the unruffled undercurrent, beneath the groundswell of the Christian's sorrows; a peace not often disturbed, and never finally overthrown. 5. Incomprehensive, both to the men of this world and saints of God as well. (G. S. Bowes, B.A.) *The secret of peace:*—He who climbs above the cares of the world and turns his face to his God, has found the sunny side of life. The world's side of the hill is chill and freezing to a spiritual mind, but the Lord's presence gives a warmth of joy which turns winter into summer. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *The peace of elevation:*—Dust, by its own nature, can rise only so far above the road; and birds which fly higher never have it upon their wings. So the heart that knows how to fly high enough escapes those little cares and vexations which brood upon the earth, but cannot rise above it into that purer air. (H. W. Beecher.) *True and false peace:*—There are other kinds of peace besides the peace of God. There is the peace, for example, of an uninformed conscience; of one who thinks that an amiable disposition, and a freedom from open or definite sin, is enough to win heaven. There is the peace of a sleeping conscience; a conscience still lying dormant in the torpor of natural indifference. There is the peace of a drugged conscience; of one who is surrendering himself to a bosom lust, and refusing to look on to its probable misery in this life, to its certain punishment in the next. There is the peace too of a hardened conscience; of one who has become so used to sin that it has lost its power to alarm; of one who can even lie down to die, impenitent and unremorseful, on the strength of a few vague hopes, if even these, in God's

mercy and in Christ's atonement. All sinful men are not yet consciously unhappy, though of peace, in its true meaning, they can know nothing. There is no peace, saith my God, no true, permanent peace of God, to the wicked. God calls us to peace. That is what He offers to us. Repose instead of restlessness; tranquillity instead of confusion; an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, because entering into that within the veil. God grant that the religion here known may be all of that character; a religion of quietness, a religion of soberness, a religion of reality, a religion of peace. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The peace passing all understanding*:—You have seen the sea when it was perfectly smooth, with hardly a ripple on the water; and you have watched it when lashed into a fury by the tempest, the waves run mountains-high. But all this rage of the elements is only on the surface; below the waves and foam and howling winds there are depths which no storms ever reach, where the many-branched coral and other strange forms of growth and life spread over vast submarine plains and valleys, throughout the whole extent of which reigns the silence and stillness of an unbroken calm. Such is the contrast between the outward trials of life and the deep inward peace which reigns in the heart which is stayed in God. We cannot escape the trials of life, but if there be within us true trust in God, then there will be depths in our inmost being where no storms can reach, depths beyond the play of the waves of this troublesome world, where the fury of the tempest cannot come, where all will be calm and still. (*J. B. Mozley, D.D.*) *The peace of God a protection*:—The peace, the harmony of soul, the repose and concord of the whole man, which is God's gift, the effect of God's own presence by His Holy Spirit, shall keep you as in a fortified place from all danger, from all the crafts and assaults of evil. What is it which exposes us to our worst perils? Is it not a roving heart? A heart seeking rest and finding none? It is not the unsatisfied insatiable thirst which is in us all by nature, for a happiness which yet earth cannot give. That is what makes a man a pleasure-hunter, an idolator of the world, the slave of his evil passions and sinful lusts. That is the bait which the devil presents to the fallen Adam: and if it succeeded even with the unfallen and upright, who shall wonder if it succeeds with him? Let a man have found peace in God, let him have tasted of that water after drinking of which none thirsts again for any other, and he has a safeguard against evil. Why should he go after that which cannot profit or satisfy when he has within him a spring of living water. That is the sense in which Paul writes that the peace of God shall guard our hearts and our thoughts, *i.e.*, the seat of thought, and the workings of thought. There will be no roving desires there to go abroad from the camp and fall into the enemy's ambush. And there will be no traitor there to open the gate of the citadel to some disguised foe. The heart that has found peace in God, is kept as in a sure fortress by that peace itself. It is built as a city that is at unity in itself (*Prov. xviii. 10; Ps. cxxii. 3, Ps. xlii. 5*). It is all at one. It is not divided between this and that; it is not, like the heart of nature, a fighting ground of conflicting parties; it is in safe keeping under an almighty hand. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Peace protecting*:—The child frightened in his play runs to seek his mother. She takes him upon her lap and presses his head to her bosom; and with tenderest words of love, she locks down upon him, and smoothes his hair, and kisses his cheek and wipes away his tears, and then in a low and gentle voice, she sings some sweet descant, some lullaby of love; and the fear fades out from his face, and a smile of satisfaction plays over it, and at length his eyes close, and he sleeps in the deep depths and delights of peace. God Almighty is the mother, and the soul is the frightened child; and He folds it in His arms, dispels its fear, and lulls it to repose, saying, "Sleep, my darling, sleep! It is I who watch and protect thee. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." The mother's arms encircle but one; but God clasps every yearning soul to His bosom and gives it the peace which passeth understanding, beyond the reach of care or storm. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Peace protective*:—The peace of God will keep us from sinning under our troubles and from sinking under them. (*Matthew Henry.*)

Vers. 8-9. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things. We have here—I. A DIRECTION FOR THOUGHT—"Think on these things." II. A DIRECTION FOR PRACTICE—"These things do." III. A PROMISE CONDITIONAL ON OBEDIENCE TO THE TWO—"The God of peace shall be with you." (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Christian life*:—I. ITS FEATURES. 1. Truth in word, &c. 2. Honour, integrity and purity in conduct. 3. Whatever is beautiful and praiseworthy in behaviour. II. ITS MOTIVES. Apostolical. 1. Precept. 2. Example. III. ITS ADVANTAGES. 1. The presence of the God of peace.

2. The peace He gives. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The meditation and practice of holiness* :—A second time we have the conclusion of the whole matter. Before it was “finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” The whole history of conversion with all its preliminary struggles, the terrors and sorrows of repentance, the hopes and fears of faith, finds its issue and rest in this. But here is a second “finally.” There is something beyond the exultation of deliverance through Christ; and that is the attainment of a perfect character in Him. We are urged—I. **TO FIX OUR FULL AND DETERMINATE THOUGHT UPON PERFECTION.** The word is often used to signify due appreciation, and it bids us here with strong emphasis estimate rightly the place morality holds in the gospel. 1. It was the glory of the apostle’s career to proclaim everywhere that for the sake of the sacrifice of the Cross the vilest transgressors repenting and believing in Jesus were assured of forgiveness and reputed as righteous. But it became the hard necessity of his life to have to defend it against perversion. The enemy everywhere followed him, sowing tares. The abuse which taught men to sin that grace might abound was the subject of his ceaseless protest. In the former part of this Epistle he had dwelt on the worthlessness of all good works as the ground of the sinner’s acceptance: and because he had so utterly disparaged human goodness in the third chapter, he now in the fourth vindicates the claims of Christian godliness. On the way to the Cross think not of any good in yourself; on the way from the Cross think of all the obligations of holiness. 2. For all the provisions of grace have their issue in our moral perfection. Renouncing our own righteousness which is of the law, we are to attain a righteousness of faith, which in another sense must be “our own.” Pardon is the removal of an obstruction to holiness. The grace of God that bringeth salvation teaches us to aspire to all good works. II. **TO PONDER ITS UNLIMITED VARIETY OF OBLIGATIONS.** 1. The apostle exhorts us to train our minds to a high and refined sense of this. It is true that the regenerate are taught of God, and have the Spirit to guide them; but this is not to supersede the use of their own faculties. The Bible shows us “what is good” in its great principles, but leaves us to find out their illimitable application. 2. The object of this study is excellence according to all its standards. “Whatsoever things” suggests that every Christian virtue has its own unlimited field of study. What a boundless field, *e.g.*, is truth. 3. The result of this constant study is the education of the spiritual taste into a high pitch of delicacy. The Christian’s standard of truth, dignity, &c., becomes higher than that of other men. Here lies the secret of the difference between Christian and Christian, between careless professors who are always stumbling themselves, and a cause of offence to others, and the educated disciples who adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour. Receive this exhortation and you will come by degrees so accurate in your moral judgment as never to fail, and be in the best sense, “a law unto yourselves.” III. **TO GIVE IT THE FERVENT DESIRE OF OUR MEDITATION.** The “thinking” signifies that intent contemplation of perfection which feeds the soul’s regenerate longing to attain it. 1. Mark with what exquisite skill the elements of perfection are combined into one lovely whole. We must look steadily at this assemblage of ethical graces until we are enkindled with its loveliness. 2. And as the Christian is exhorted to delight in the thought of perfection as the aggregate of all excellencies, so also he must make every individual principle the object of affectionate contemplation. How beautiful are truth, religious dignity, &c. 3. As the virtues of holiness are displayed in the Word of God, to think of them is to meditate on it. “O how I love Thy law.” To the soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, the Bible is an everlasting delight. 4. Moreover, such an insatiate student delights to consider the lives of those who have gone before him in the narrow way—Christ the supreme standard and pattern of the result; Paul and others as examples of the process. Those who, like ourselves, have had to travel through all the stages of the ascent from sin to holiness leave their example for our encouragement. But while we imitate them we must aspire to Him. IV. **TO MAKE IT OUR PRACTICAL CONCERN.** Let not thinking end, but turn your meditations to practice. 1. Generally there is to be nothing visionary in our religion. Hence the abrupt “do.” There is a sentimental religion which thinks loftily and talks magniloquently about virtue, but ends there. Our religion must not be a barren homage to the saintly qualities of others. What man has been man may be, by the grace of God, even though the man may have been a Paul. 2. Every scriptural ideal of excellence may be realized in practice. The pagan writers had their noble ideals, but nowhere outside the Bible is there such a consummate standard as this. And then, again, the highest moralists who sat

not at the feet of Jesus despaired of their own teaching, imperfect as it was, "unless indeed," as one said, "God should become incarnate to teach us." Christianity alone has the golden link between thought and practice. 3. As thinking must not terminate in itself, so practice must be the diligent regulation of our life according to all the principles of holiness. There is a sense, indeed, in which our religion from beginning to end is God's work; but the formation of Christian character is our own task under His blessing, and its perfection is conferred upon us, not as a gift simply, but as the seal upon our efforts, and their exceeding great reward. 4. We must work out our own salvation by governing our lives according to these holy principles particularly. If we would be perfectly true we must act out the truth in thought, word, and deed; so with dignity, &c.

V. TO THINK OF IT WITH THE PEACEFUL CONFIDENCE OF HOPE. There can be no encouragement more mighty than that the God of Peace shall be with us. 1. God will be with us animating our pursuit by the assurance of reconciliation. There is no spirit for the pursuit unless we know that the guilty past is pardoned. The heart must be enlarged if we would run in the way of His commandments; and don't narrow it and impede your progress by permitted sin. 2. God will be with us crowning our effort. Peace is the full sum of His heavenly blessing. "Great peace have they who love His law." Others may have a transient joy and superficial excitement. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *Soul perfection*.—The finest specimen of a Christian is he in whom all the graces, like the strings of an angel's harp, are in the most perfect harmony. Therefore, we are to beware of cultivating one grace or attending to any one duty at the expense of others. That is possible; and never more likely to happen than in these days of recoil from mere speculative theology, and of busy, bustling benevolence. Treading in our Master's steps, we are to go about doing good; yet we may undertake so many works of Christian philanthropy as to trench on the hours that should be sacred to devotion. In seeking the good of others, we may so neglect the cultivation of our own hearts, and the duties we owe to our own families, as to have to cry with the man of old, They made me keeper of vineyards, and mine own vineyard I have not kept. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Avoid doubtful things*.—The atmosphere is sometimes in such a peculiar state that the spectator, on coast or shore, looking abroad over the sea, cannot tell where the water ends and the sky begins; and as if some magician had raised them out of their proper element, and turned their sails into wings, the ships seem floating in mid-air. But occasionally no line of separation is more difficult to draw than that which lies between what is right and what is wrong. Whether such and such a business or amusement, pursuit or pleasure, is wrong, and one, therefore, in which no Christian should engage, is a question that, so far as the thing itself is concerned, may be difficult to answer. But it is not difficult to answer, so far as you are concerned, if you doubt whether it is right. The apostolic rule is, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind;" and unless you are so, then, "what is not of faith is sin"—sin at least to you. (*Ibid.*) *St. Paul's farewell*.—The words are the parting counsel of the apostle. They come at the most solemn period of his life, and he was writing to the best-loved of the churches. Will he speak of the mysteries he saw and heard? Will he expound some profound doctrine? It is almost with a feeling of disappointment that we find these homely words. I. Observe the ENTIRENESS OF THE APOSTLE'S LANGUAGE. "Whatsoever things." It has sometimes been supposed that different regions of goodness might be separated from each other; religion from morality; truth from beauty. Paul recognizes no such distinction. He who furthers one truth incidentally furthers all others. II. Note how ALL THE REGIONS OF GOODNESS FIT INTO EACH OTHER. Paul, trained in Greek learning, would be familiar with the classical debates respecting the true, the beautiful, and the good. The Greek asserted that the supreme object of pursuit was the beautiful. His soul was so enwrapped in sensuous beauty, that he could recognize the good only in it. The highest object of admiration to the Roman was what was just. So some think now that the highest good is only to be found in truth, scientific facts; others in the noble and self-denying; in the romantic aspect of things. Paul discourages no forms of goodness, and would welcome it whether in myth, legend, song, art, nature, domestic life. III. THE TRUE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER CONSISTS NOT IN THE MERE ABSENCE OF EVIL BUT IN THE POSSESSION AND CULTIVATION OF THE GOOD. So dwell on "these things" as to make them your own. Your soul was made for them, and in nothing lower can it be happy. Only by thinking on them can their opposites be cast out. Darkness is only to be expelled by light, impurity by holiness, the love of sin by the love of God—in individuals or communities.

(*R. M. Stewart.*) *Christian character*:—I. SHOULD BE COMPLETE ON EVERY SIDE. II. INCLUDES EVERYTHING THAT IS EXCELLENT. III. REQUIRES MUCH STUDY AND PRAYER. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian righteousness*:—1. The sanctification of men is the true object of redemption (Gal. i. 4; Tit. ii. 14). For this Christ took our nature, was tempted in all points like as we are, and died. And as His salvation is not a common and earthly good, so the holiness to which He moulds us is not a common and natural perfection, but one singular and supernatural. 2. In these words the apostle opposes his doctrine to that of a false teacher, who insisted upon legal observances, which are much more easy and agreeable than the study of real virtue. He enforces whatsoever things are—I. TRUE. This comes first, because before all things we shall embrace the Truth as disciples of Him who is "the Truth." Here should be the foundation of all our conduct. We must consider "things true"—1. Which are not feigned, or invented to please, but which really subsist. 2. Such as are at the foundation firm and solid, not shadows or figures. Falsehoods of whatever kind are prohibited. 3. All vain and deceitful appearances are excluded. Our manner of life must be plain and simple, purged from the love of the world which, as a shadow, passes away. II. VENERABLE—all that relates to the dignity of the high vocation to which God has called us, renouncing all frivolity and folly. III. JUST. 1. What God commands us to render unto men, whether honour, deference, and obedience to our superiors in the state or the family; the guidance and protection of inferiors; friendship and assistance towards equals, or kindness towards all. 2. The laws and duties of the city and society in which we live, save when they conflict with conscience. IV. PURE. We should be careful not only to preserve our bodies from pollution, but our hearts, tongues, eyes, dress, cultivating modesty, and avoiding every species of dissoluteness. V. LOVELY. Although all virtues are excellent in themselves, yet some are more pleasing than others; even as we see amongst the stars, though all are beautiful, yet some shine with a brighter lustre. Among the virtues, sweetness of mind, courtesy, clemency, willingness to oblige, show with peculiar brightness. VI. GOOD REPORT. Among actions which are good, some are held more specially in repute. St. Paul would have us give ourselves to them with especial care, because those who hold them in high esteem will love us better, and yield more readily to our religious influence. VII. That nothing may be omitted, the apostle adds, if there be ANY VIRTUE OR PRAISE. None of these Divine and beautiful flowers must be wanting. Indeed, it is not possible to have one in any degree of perfection without the others. They are sisters so firmly linked together that they cannot be torn asunder. (*J. Dailé.*) *The moralities of Christianity*:—I. WHAT THESE MORALITIES ARE. Whatsoever things are—I. TRUE. 1. In speech. We must be free from lying. This is when men, with a purpose to deceive, say what is false either by assertion (Acts v. 3) or promise (Prov. xix. 22). Lying is—(1) Most contrary to the nature of God, who is truth itself. (2) To the new nature (Eph. iv. 25, 26; Isa. lxiii. 8). (3) To society, for commerce is kept up by truth. 2. In actions. We should keep the integrity of a good conscience (Psa. xxxii. 2; 2 Cor. i. 12). Sincerity and candour should be seen in all we do. Satan assaults you with wiles, but your strength lies in downright honesty (Eph. vi. 14; Isa. xxxviii. 2-3). 2. Honest—grave and venerable, free from scurrility, lightness and vanity in word or deed. Religion is a serious thing, so should they be who profess it (1 Tim. ii. 9-10; Tit. ii. 2). 3. Just. We must give every man his due, and defraud none of his right; whether (1) superiors (Matt. xxii. 21), (2) inferiors (Col. iv. 1), (3) equals (Rom. xiii. 8; Matt. vii. 12). 4. Peace. Nothing obscene or unchaste should be seen or heard from a Christian (Eph. iv. 29; v. 12). 5. Lovely. There are certain things which are not only commanded by God, but are grateful to men, such as affability, peaceableness, usefulness (Rom. xiv. 18; 1 Thess. v. 15; Acts ii. 46-47). 6. Of good report. There are some things which have no express evil in them, but they are not of good fame (1 Thess. v. 22; 1 Peter ii. 12). 7. Virtue and praise, two things linked together. Many things in the world are praised which are not virtuous; such things are to be abhorred. But if there be any good thing even among the heathen, religion should be adorned with it. II. IN WHAT MANNER DOETH CHRISTIANITY ENFORCE THEM. 1. It derives them all from the highest fountain, the Spirit of sanctification, by whom we are fitted for these duties (Eph. v. 9; Gal. v. 22). 2. It makes them to grow out of proper principles. (1) Faith in Christ (Heb. xi. 6; Rom. vii. 4). (2) Love to God (Gal. v. 6; Tit. ii. 11-12). 3. It directs by the highest rule, God's mind revealed in His Word, the absolute rule of right and wrong. 4. It aims at the highest end, the glory of God (1 Cor. x. 31; Phil. i. 11;

Acts xxiv. 14-16). III. FOR WHAT REASONS. 1. Because grace does not abolish so much of nature as is good, but refines and sublimates it, by causing us to act from higher principles and to higher ends. 2. Because these conduce to the honour of religion. The credit of religion depends much on the credit of its professors (Ezek. xxxvi. 20-21; 2 Sam. xii. 14; 2 Pet. ii. 2; Tit. ii. 10). 3. Our peace and safety are concerned in it. (1) The world is least irritated by a good conversation (1 Pet. iii. 13; 1 Sam. xxiv. 17). (2) When we do not bring trouble on ourselves by our immoralities, God takes us under His special protection (ver. 9). 4. These things grow from that internal principle of grace which is planted in our hearts by regeneration (Acts xxvi. 20; Matt. iii. 8). 5. All the disorders contrary to these limits and bounds by which our conversations are regulated, are condemned by the righteous law of God which is the rule of the new creature; and therefore they ought to be avoided by the good Christian (Matt. v. 19). 6. These moralities are not small things; the glory of God, the safety of His people, the good of human society, and the evidence of our own sincerity being concerned in them. Conclusion: 1. If religion adopts moralities into its constitution, we must not leave them out of our practice (Tit. iii. 8). Here is an answer to those who ask wherein must we be holy and obedient. (T. Manton, D.D.) *Expansiveness of Christian life*:—These words come at the close of a noble delineation of Christian life. It is as if having unfolded tract after tract the vision suddenly expanded, and a sense of the boundlessness of that life came over the apostle, and then under the stress of that feeling he pours the fulness of his soul into one utterance, emphasizing its breadth by the six-fold repetition of "whatsoever things." As much as to say "all things conceivable, attainable, include them in your view of Christian life." Christian life is greater than any description of it, and no experience has yet exhausted it. I. CHRIST IS LORD OVER THE KINGDOM OF TRUTH; THERE IS, THEREFORE, NOTHING IN THAT KINGDOM WHICH A CHRISTIAN MAY NOT ASPIRE TO POSSESS. Our enemies are surprised at this claim. Because we put the Cross in the centre they fancy there is nothing but the centre. 1. Some deny the originality of Christian truth, and say of some fragments of it, "It is in Seneca or Confucius." But whatever true things are in any of the wise teachers of the past, we shall not resent their being found anterior to Christ. They were in God before they were in them, and they have their place in the kingdom of truth of which Christ is the King, and of which we are now the heirs. 2. Detractors of another sort have put the stigma on the narrowness of our life. The large, full, free life is that which philosophy, art, science, literature, and travel make possible. But all things here are beforehand in Christ. They may not be classed as yet, but they belong to the kingdom of truth, and therefore to us. 3. Men who say that "It is all over with Christian life. It is an old-world story, a thing past and done. The real life—the life of the future—has its roots in material forces, and in the views, hopes, and aims to which these forces are giving shape." But whatever is here is part of the heritage of our life. II. THE EARLIEST ACTINGS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE WERE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS EXPANSIVENESS. 1. Hardly was its voice heard among men than it began to bring the teaching of the lilies and the birds, and the sunshine and rain into its glad tidings. It no sooner stepped into heathen life than it commended the faith of centurions, Syro-Phœnician women, the endurance of Roman soldiers, and the self-denial of Grecian wrestlers and runners. It went after the waifs and strays of Jewish society. 2. While Christian life denounced the awful abysses that lay in the moral life of heathenism, it accepted whatever was Divine in its civilization. It recognized in it the working of the Divine Spirit, heard its poets preluding the song of Christian brotherhood in the words, "Ye are God's offspring"; saw the glory of Roman law; and in Greek wisdom questions which God had helped to formulate, and God's Son had come to answer. It asserted its inheritance in all the virtues of Greek and Roman life, and found an asylum for its slaves. III. Another illustration of the expansiveness is that it is not presented to us in the New Testament in its developments, but in its germs. It is leaven, seed, a new spiritual force, developing, penetrating, taking possession of, allying itself to all experiences, manners, customs, countries, races. IV. LOOK AT THE EXPANSIVE CHARACTER OF THE BOOK BY WHICH CHRISTIAN LIFE IS FED. The Bible grows in the experience of the individual. It is a greater Book to the man than to the boy. It grows in the experience of the Church. It is not the Bible that changes, but the eyes that pore over it grow wider as they read. Something of this is due, to the fact that it is in the main a book of principles. In their expansion the Bible expands. New circumstances demand new aspects of truth, new applications of principle. And every new

application is a discovery of the wealth that remains to be dug out of the Book of God. V. THIS HAS A PRACTICAL BEARING ON THE ATTITUDE OF CHURCHES TO EACH OTHER. 1. No one Church, however venerable in age, or fresh with the dew of youth, has a monopoly of the good things of God. Let us covet earnestly each other's gifts—the fervour of the Wesleyan, the self-dependence of the Congregationalist, the ordered government of the Presbyterian, the beautiful worship of the Episcopalian. 2. And why should Church yearnings stop short here: think of the many things, great and good, in the social life of our country. We want the business habits, direct dealing, and honour among her commercial men; the free play and force of her public opinion, her respect for rights, her forbearance; the noble self-renunciation of her soldiers and sailors; the enthusiasm of her men of science, and the gravity of her lawyers. (*A. Macleod, D.D.*) *Faith in action*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A BUILDING UP OF CHARACTER. 1. It is more than belief of certain truths, the sustaining of certain religious emotions; it is the continuous working into the warp and woof of our life every good and excellent quality, until we arrive at the measure of and stature of the fulness that is in Christ. 2. Of course there must be a foundation, and a good one; but it is poor sort of work to be always laying foundations with so few buildings showing signs of growth, much less of completeness. 3. May not this partly account for the slow spread of the gospel? We can show many who have begun to build, but is that an inducement for others to begin also? II. IT IS JUST BY THESE THINGS THAT WE ARE JUDGED BY THE WORLD. 1. It is very true that the world is not discerning in its judgments. It sees professors doing disreputable things and immediately exclaims, "There is your religion for you." With just as much justice as if after Satan had transformed himself into an angel of light, he again assumed his demoniacal form you were to say, "There's your angel for you." 2. But that is no excuse for giving the world occasion to speak slightly of the gospel. And it is just by the neglect of things virtuous and praiseworthy that we provide worldlings with arrows to shoot at Christ's cause. What can the world think when men who profess to be sure of heaven grumble at everything that goes on in earth; when those who profess to have received mercy are unforgiving, close-fisted, and hard to deal with. 3. It is not by our professions of faith that the world judges us: it cannot judge of the new birth, faith, the indwelling of the Spirit; but of the outer life it does judge, and has to some extent a right to judge. How watchful and prayerful we should be that it does not misjudge the Master through us? How careful we should be to be living epistles known and read of all men. III. WE SHOULD LEARN OF ALL MEN WHATEVER IS VIRTUOUS OR PRAISEWORTHY IN THEIR LIFE. Let the Church learn punctuality and business habits from the merchant; the Christian, courtesy from the outward politeness of the man of the world; the Protestant, that zeal which is so self-sacrificing and the devotion that is so warm in the Roman Catholic or Mohammedan; the believer, patient and impartial study of truth from the man of science. From any and every quarter let whatsoever is of good report be welcomed. IV. LET NONE IMAGINE, HOWEVER, THAT ANY EXCELLENCE OR VIRTUE CAN BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR FAITH IN CHRIST. Paul was a model of every natural virtue before his conversion, and yet none needed conversion more than he. The young man whom Jesus loved was the same. Paul counted his virtues loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and nothing but that knowledge will save your soul. (*R. J. Lynd, B.A.*) *Thought*:—In the service of God there is employment for every faculty and function; they each have a mission for the Master. The power to think is the prerogative distinctly peculiar to man. I. THOUGHT IS A DUTY. Thoughtlessness, and consequently ignorance, is what the Lord so pathetically lamented in His people Israel. "Israel doth not know; My people doth not consider." Thoughtlessness has wrought the ruin of our race. Isaac "meditated at eventide." Joshua was commanded to "meditate day and night in the statutes of the Lord." David was a diligent and talented thinker. "When I consider Thy heavens," &c. II. SUBJECTS FOR THOUGHT. "Whatsoever things are true," &c. We are to think, but not at random. Definite thought alone is profitable. There are subjects worthy of winning the thoughts of thinkers the most profound. (*J. W. Bray.*) *Thoughts*:—I. THAT WE SHOULD AIM AT PERFECT INTEGRITY OF CHARACTER. 1. Christian graces are commonly grouped together in the Scriptures. The reason is, that they have all one root and originating source; and where one exists the rest may be looked for. 2. Some there are who are satisfied with few excellencies, forgetting that, though remarkable for one or two virtues, their character may still be egregiously defective. It may be distorted and dispro-

portionate, like fruit that is ripe only on one side, or like trees with half their branches withered. 3. It is easy to cultivate those virtues which are most congenial with our natural temperament, most opportune to our immediate circumstances, or most frequent in our circle of friends. But of these we may be the least careful, while we should bestow all possible diligence to bring up those graces to which we are least prone, or which are least popular. 4. This apostle would have us lacking nothing. II. IN THE ACQUISITION OF A PERFECT CHARACTER, THE PROPER DIRECTION AND CONTROL OF THE THOUGHTS IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE. Thoughts are either indicative of character, or formative of it. Our thoughts partly result from our disposition, and partly create it. In the former light they may serve as a test of our real state to ourselves. But mainly we would speak of the thoughts as tending to form character. Such thoughts are those voluntary ones which we choose to indulge. 1. Thoughts create images: images produce desires: desires influence the temper and direct the will: the will displays itself in overt action. 2. What thoughts should we indulge? (1) Things of truth: of honesty, *i.e.*, honourableness, respect-worthiness: of justice: of purity: of amiability, or such as win the esteem and love of others: and of good report. (2) Meditate on truth, especially Christian truth. Think of everything, in your deportment, which is becoming to the dignity of a Christian character. 3. How to think of these things. (1) In deliberate meditation: in the avoidance of whatever would awaken contrary thoughts. (2) Think of these things with ardent love of them, with strenuous and prayerful effort after their attainment, and the exemplification of them in your conduct. (3) By such training and cultivation of the thoughts may we expect to grow in grace; by the neglect of it, we shall decline in our piety and perhaps make shipwreck of faith. (*T. G. Horton, M.A.*) *The transforming power of thought:—* Think on these things and you will become—I. BETTER. What a man thinks most about grows upon him. A youth may care very little about business; but presently he becomes interested in it, and it grows upon him until before middle age is reached he can scarcely think of anything else. It is so with the artist, with the pleasure-seeker, and with the Christian. Let him think on "whatsoever things are true," &c., and the more attractive they will become; the larger place will they occupy in his heart, and the mightier will be their influence on his life. Beholding these things with an open face, he will be naturally, insensibly, gradually changed into the same image. II. MORE CHARITABLE. One of our most common tendencies is to look at the weaknesses and shortcomings of our brethren—to let the thought of these things exclude the thought of their good qualities. Hence harsh judgments, suspicion, distrust. If, however, we would lay aside this tendency and "take account of" (*R.V. marg.*) whatsoever things are true, &c., in our neighbours—look upon their good instead of on their faulty side, we should think more kindly of them, our thoughts would influence our conduct, and we should be drawn towards them by a threefold cord of love. And this is possible. There is much that is praiseworthy even in brethren who have been overtaken in a fault. Much of our unity, success, comfort as communities, depend on our cultivating this habit. III. MORE HELPFUL. A man's power to help does not so much depend on his intentions as on his character and disposition. The presence of a good man—a man who has "thought on these things" until they have become part of himself, always acts like a tonic on weaker souls. It reproves their slowness, quickens their desires, and stimulates their efforts. Such a man is a means of grace. (*J. Ogle.*) *Christian thought:—*Not the common word for "think," but the reckoning, counting up, dwelling repeatedly on these things. It is not the bee's touching upon the flowers that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time upon them and drawing out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most on Divine truth that will prove the choicest, wisest, strongest Christian. (*J. Hall.*) *The difficulty and importance of continuous thought:—*How many persons are made and kept frivolous by an inability to prescribe the subjects on which their mind shall run! They would give, or fancy they would give, all that they possess for the power to say decisively but for one short hour, "This and but this shall be the subject of my thoughts." But they find that when they open their Bible the mind has flown away to some meditation of things present and transitory; when they kneel down to pray, even attention is absent, they cannot remember God's presence, much less can they wish the thing they profess to pray for. Such persons are good judges of Paul's precept, however little they may believe in the possibility of obeying it. For indeed it is a very dreadful thing, when we reflect upon it—a strong proof, were there no other, of our fallen and ruined state—that a man should thus sit at a helm of which he has lost

the rudder, should thus be responsible for the conduct of a mind over which practically he has no control. And if that responsibility cannot be desired; if "out of the heart the mouth speaketh," if by the heart the path of life is chosen and the course of life shaped; in short, if, in every sense of the words, "out of the heart are the issues of life," and according to the life must be the eternal judgment of each one of us; how terrible must it be to be unable from a moral impotency to obey the charge "keep that heart with all diligence"; to be compelled to let thought drift whither it will, and yet to know that thought guides action, and action may destroy the soul. (*Dean Vaughan.*) Whatsoever things are true.—Truth hath—1. God to maintain it. 2. Defence in itself. 3. Goodness to accompany it. 4. Liberty consequent upon it. 5. It is connatural to our principles. 6. The foundation of order. 7. The ground of human converse. 8. The bond of union. (*B. Whichcote, B.D.*) *False measures of truth*:—I. THE LONGEST SWORD; and then the Mahometans must have it; and before them the great disturbers of mankind, whom we call conquerors, as Alexander and Cæsar. II. IF THE LOUDEST LUNGS must carry it, then the Baal-worshippers must have it from Elijah; for he had but one still voice; but they cry from morning to night. III. IF THE MOST VOICES; then the condemners of our Saviour must have it: for they all cry, Crucify, Crucify. Therefore these are false measures. (*Ibid.*) *Spheres of truth*:—I. Be true to YOURSELVES—to your better nature. As Shakespeare says, "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." II. TO YOUR NEIGHBOURS in—1. Word. 2. Love. 3. Act. 4. Manner. III. TO GOD. 1. To His claims. 2. To your promises. 3. In your hearts, for truth is required in the inward parts. 4. In your life, for there you may best glorify Him. (*W. Landells, D.D.*) *Universality of truth*:—Moral truth in its universality is like the pine-tree. Societies have claimed the one for their own, as some naturalists have claimed the other for northern climes. But both are wrong. As to the pine, it is represented in all zones, from the cedars of Lebanon to the fir-bushes of the Scandinavian mountain-tops. There are particular trees, as there are certain forms of speculative and political truth, which can survive only in a limited region; the one being fitted only for a peculiar atmosphere, as the other is only adapted to circumscribed types of mind. But moral truth flourishes amongst all the mental productions of man, as the pine amongst the vegetation of the world. It must thrive everywhere, because suited to and intended for the world. (*Dr. Herman Masius.*) *New truth unwelcome*:—Men who have lived in traditional knowledge do not thank you for a new truth. It dazes and confounds their dim vision, which is unsuited to its reception. Their bewilderment at the light is similar to that of the cricket. As that creature lives chiefly in the dark, so its eyes seem formed for the gloominess of its abode; and you have only to light a candle unexpectedly, and it becomes so dazed that it cannot find its way back to its retreat. (*Goldsmith.*) *Loyalty to truth*:—A father found a favourite cherry-tree hacked and ruined. He cried sternly to his son: "George, who did this?" He looked at his father with a quivering lip, and said: "Father, I cannot tell a lie: I did it." "Alas!" said the father, "my beautiful tree is ruined; but I would rather lose all the trees I have than have a liar for my son." The boy who feared a lie worse than punishment became the hero of his country, General Washington. Whatsoever things are honest.—The word does not exactly mean what we call honest, but what is worthy of honour, revered, august, venerable, majestic. Think on whatever things you can look up to in persons, circumstances, and respect. Especially in social life, in the political world, in literature. Where there is no room for reverence there is no room for life. The name of God, the idea of worship, the solemnity of life, the immortality of the soul, the fact of death, the judgment-seat—"think on these things," awful, venerable things! Then government, law, the State, the Church, the ruling powers and influences of society; the magistrate, holding "not the sword in vain, the minister of God to thee for good"—"think on these things," pray for them; check faction, uphold authority. Nor are the grand advances of science to be omitted from this catalogue. For these, we are to bless God. His hand is in them all. The astronomical accuracy that can calculate the moment of an eclipse a hundred years hence—the power of expediting communication, like lightning, to the ends of the earth—the triumph over winds and waves—the mighty faculty of the poet—the genius of history, the gift of eloquence—the prevention of disease, the alleviation of pain—the "rise up and walk" of medical skill—these, too, together with the awful and majestic in nature and art, whatsoever in mountain or sea or sky,

whatsoever in painting or noble structure shows greatness of purpose, nobility of soul, and tends to bow our souls in admiration—"think on these things." (*B. Kent.*) Whatsoever things are just, observant of the rule of right—equal. The original signification of the term was custom—order—social rule, in opposition to the unmannered life of wild tribes, who are swayed by inclination, passion, caprice. There is a Divine order in this world, amid all our confusions. He who walks in that order walks in the way of the Lord. That is right, just. "There is none righteous." Christ is the "Just One." There is His righteousness; we must be clothed with it. "Looking unto Jesus" is the loving study of God's laws perfectly fulfilled in Him for us. Thus we are taught to repent of our deviations, i.e., sin, missing the mark, going out of the way. This leads us to acknowledge our weakness, and to cry mightily to God to bring us to Christ, "the Way." The brief description of Christianity in apostolic times was "that way," or "the way of the Lord," "the way of life." It is God's way of working, saving, ruling, pardoning, that we want to walk in—the way of righteousness. Think on the things in society that are conformed to this rule of order and right. There is the way of the righteous King. He walks there. There He takes delight. In the family, in the Church, in the State; whatever is upright, observant of right, and struggles against wrong-doing, fraud, injustice, is the finger of God. Consciously or unconsciously it is doing His work; the vindication of human rights against oppression, ignorance, superstition, the devil, is working for and with Christ. Take a large and ample range over society, discover the right, the lawful, the just, making head against the wrong, the false, the licentious; think of these things; pray for them, and see God's hand and way in them. Think on them; they are; God does not leave Himself without a witness; there are more signs of righteous government in the world than many of us suspect. They are about our path if we will but open our eyes, and observe, and desire to see them. There are flowers, and palms, and pools in the desert. "Think on these things." (*Ibid.*) Whatsoever things are pure, unsullied, akin to holy. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself," &c. "Ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." "Some preach Christ . . . not sincerely." "Lay hands suddenly on no man. . . keep thyself pure." Thus the word has reference to what may and does defile; influences in the Church and the world which tend to stain our consciences; connivance at sin, excusing evil, insincere statements; having a bad motive underlying right conduct; preaching such a gospel as Paul rejoiced to know was preached, and yet not with cleanness of conscience. Timothy is to let the candidates for the ministry consider their motives; he is to study their conduct for a while, lest love of money, or of applause, of vulgar fame, or ecclesiastical power and influence, should prove the determining influences, and thus he would be a partaker of other men's sins. This suggests the need of "the blood of sprinkling," that our actions, motives, powers, prayers, may be cleansed of all vile, base admixtures. A true Christian will bemoan nothing more feelingly than the constant detection of impure, low motive in his spiritual life. The apostle exhorts us to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." In the intercourse of the world one is in constant danger of a certain miasma, the pollution of low, selfish, interested motive; it is drawn in naturally as the pure air; and unless we think of "whatsoever things are pure," and do like the Italian peasant, when the night comes on, get out of the low ground on to a hill above the reach of the miasma, we are in danger of losing the freshness and vigour of our spiritual life. When the day is over we should get us up to the mountains, and converse with our Lord concerning the conduct of the day, and ask Him to see "if there is any wicked way in us, and to wash us, not our feet only, but also our hands and our head." "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (*Ibid.*) *The power of purity:*—It is a marvellous thing to see how a pure and innocent heart purifies all that it approaches. The most ferocious natures are soothed and tamed by innocence. And so with human beings there is a delicacy so pure that vicious men in its presence become almost pure; all of purity that is in them being brought out; like attaches itself to like. The pure heart becomes a centre of attraction, round which similar atoms gather, and from which dissimilar ones are repelled. A corrupt heart in an hour elicits all that is bad in us; a spiritual one brings out and draws to itself all that is best and purest. Such was Christ. He stood in the world the Light of the world, to which all sparks of light gradually gathered. He stood in the presence of impurity, and men and women became pure. (*F. W.*

*Robertson, M.A.) Purity inculcated:—*Live in purity, my child, through this fair life, pure from every vice and every evil knowledge, as the lily lives in silent innocence, as the turtle-dove amid the branches, that thou, when the Father downward gazes, mayest be His beloved object on earth, as the unconscious wanderer gazes on the lovely star of even; that thou, when the sun dissolves thee, mayest show thyself a pearl of purest whiteness, that thy thoughts may be as the rose's perfume, that thy love may be like a glowing sunbeam, and thy life like shepherd's song of evening, like the tones his flute pours forth so softly. (*Schiller.*) *Whatsoever things are lovely.—*I. THE UNION OF STRENGTH AND BEAUTY IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. 1. The virtues of this verse are parts of one organic whole; they so hang together that the absence of one goes far to destroy the value of the other. This is especially true of "things honest and just." The world is compelled to respect truth, however lacking in grace. The addition of "things lovely" elevates the righteous into the good man: but the righteous man may be honoured and trusted though he is not admired or loved. The want of grace detracts from the symmetry of character; but in the moral world the beautiful has value only as underneath the outward charm there is the solid foundation of righteousness. 2. There is a certain beauty even about the most rugged forms of moral strength. It is a sign of incompleteness of character when a man takes pleasure in putting the truth in an offensive form, or in enforcing the right with a contempt for the feelings of others. There are those who have no desire to conciliate, and who are too assertive, yet there is in them a strength of principle, a manly resolution, an unflinching devotion to the right which is far more admirable than the amiability which is profuse in outward signs of kindness, but shrinks from the service which justice requires. 3. Still, when we think of things lovely, we refer to qualities by which the more severe attributes of character are softened. Standing alone they are a very poor possession. Those who employ all their art in order to have the outward clothing of gentleness, elegance, and grace have their reward. They are favourites of the social circle; and yet they may be lacking in the first elements of spiritual nobility. In the true Christian ideal the graces are only those elements which add tenderness and sweetness to the more masculine virtues which are essential to the toils and conflicts of this world of sin. II. NOTE THE VARIETIES OF SPIRITUAL BEAUTY. 1. There is a tendency to find beauty only in the feminine virtues—gentleness, patience, compassion, sympathetic kindness—and to regard those of a more masculine character—courage, firmness, resolution—as belonging to another region. But this is to forget that God has made everything beautiful in its time and place. There is beauty in winter as well as in spring, in the scarred, weather-beaten rock, as well as in the smiling landscape. In God's works there is great variety, but everywhere beauty. 2. Can we not apply the same law to character? Would we have all men of the same character? Can we find the things that are lovely only in peaceful homes and gracious ministries, and not also where hard battles are fought and victories won for Jesus Christ? We recognize the loveliness of simple trust and absolute devotion in Magdalen in Gethsemane; but is there no beauty in the lofty heroism of Peter and John declaring that they would serve God rather than men? Barnabas seems to gather up in himself the things that are lovely, but do we find no spiritual beauty in the lion-like courage of Paul? So with Melancthon and Luther. There is moral beauty in all—different in type, but alike in origin and end. III. CONTEMPLATE THE THINGS THAT ARE LOVELY (Col. iii. 12-15). Here is indeed a galaxy of virtues, yet when we come to examine them we find that they all turn on one point—the conquest of self. 1. Selfishness is ugliness and deformity, because it is a violation of the Divine law. It may disguise itself, but when detected it is hated and despised. It is the foe of man, to be crushed by a Divine force if we are to attain to spiritual beauty. 2. The first lesson we have to learn is humility and unselfishness. So only can we follow Christ. Where His Spirit reigns the life will have this primary condition of true beauty; although at times it may be lacking in features which correspond to the popular ideas of grace. 3. The word chivalry seems to embody most of the virtues included in the phrase of the text: reverence for God and for all that is godlike in man, sympathy for all goodness, pity for all weakness, courage to face all danger, generous consideration for others dictated by true respect for self. These are just the virtues which the Christian should strive by the grace of God to develop. (*J. G. Rogers, B.A.*) *Whatsoever things are of good report (εὐφημα), auspicious, sounding well, of good omen; silent deeds that, nevertheless, sound like a trumpet,*

and awaken our admiration, making us think better of human nature; things that come to us like good news, and "make our bones fat," and our eyes glisten, and our lips tremulous—"things of good report." Like the soldier at Balaclava, who dismounted calmly in the hurricans of the fight, that his officer might ride. Like those noble women who watched day and night over the sufferer at Scutari. The poetry of life—he sphere music—audible amidst the groans of creation. Not done to be reported well of, but done for love and dear honour's sake; and which can no more be hid than one can "hide the wind." Such was Joseph's conduct to his brethren; such David's when he found Saul asleep, and took his spear away only and a piece of his garment; such Stephen's dying prayer, "Lay not this sin to their charge"; such His glorious charge, "Begin at Jerusalem." Magnanimity, the Christian pilgrim, man or woman, accompanied by "Greatheart"; the rising above the level and routine of giving, doing, loving, into the stature of the man in Christ Jesus—these are things of good report. Think of them—think that you never experience such a thrill of pleasure as when you read of such things—then what must it be to do them! Think that the capacity to enjoy the recital argues the ability to do them. Think and be thankful that you live in a world where these noble things can be done; and you can do them, if you suffer not little mercenary motives to blind your eyes and freeze your sensibilities. "And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them;" there is a sounding deed! David refusing to offer to the Lord "that which cost Him nothing"; the centurion's, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only"; Mary, with her alabaster box of ointment (and "this that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her"); Paul's, "though the more I love you, the less I am beloved"—"take back your runaway slave, Philemon, as a brother," and what he owes thee put down to me; that greatest deed in the history of the universe, how that when we were yet sinners Christ died for us. (*B. Kent.*) If there be any virtue.—The clause is an emphatic and earnest summation. The term *ἀρετή* is only here used by St. Paul. In the philosophical writings of Greece it signifies all virtue, and not any special forms of it, as it does in Homer and others. The apostle nowhere else uses it—it had been too much debased and soiled in some of the schools, and ideas were often attached to it very different from that moral excellence which with him was virtue. It is therefore here employed in its widest and highest sense of moral excellence—*virtus*, that which becomes a man redeemed by the blood of Christ and tenanted by the Holy Spirit. From its connection with the Sanscrit *virī*—to be strong—Latin *vir-vires-virtus*; or with *ἄρης-ἀριος*, it seems to signify what best becomes a man—manhood, strength, or valour, in early times. But the signification has been modified by national character and temperament. The warlike Romans placed their virtue in military courage; while their successors, the modern degenerate Italians, often apply it to a knowledge of antiquities or fine arts. The remains of other and nobler times are articles of *virtu*, and he who has most acquaintance with them is a *virtuoso*, or man of virtue. In common English, a woman's virtue is simply and alone her chastity, as being first and indispensable; and with the Scotch formerly it was thrift or industry. An old act commands schools or houses of "vertue," in which might be manufactured "cloth and sergis," to be erected in every shire. Amid such national variations, and the unsettled metaphysical disquisitions as to what forms virtue and what is its basis, it needed that He who created man for Himself should tell him what best became him—what he was made for and what he should aspire to. (*Professor Eadie.*) If there be any praise.—We all consider what is thought of us by those around us as a substantial good. Trust in our uprightness of character, belief in our abilities, and the desire that arises from this to be more intimately connected with us, and to gain our good opinion—everything of this kind is often a more valuable treasure than great riches. (*Schleiermacher.*) The esteem of others:—While we recognize in the desire of esteem an innocent and highly useful principle, we must carefully guard against making the opinion of others the sole and ultimate rule of our conduct. Temporary impulses and peculiar local circumstances may operate to produce a state of public sentiment to which a good man cannot conscientiously conform. In all cases where moral principles are involved, there is another part of our nature to be consulted. In the dictates of an enlightened conscience, we find a code to which not only the outward actions, but the appetites, propensities, and affections, are amenable, and which prescribes the limits of their just exercise. To obey the suggestions of the desire of esteem, in opposition to the

requisitions of conscience, would be to subvert the order of our mental constitution, and to transfer the responsibility to the supreme command of a mere sentinel of the outposts. Yet the operation of this principle within due limits is favourable to human well-being. It begins to operate early, long before the moral principles are fully brought out; and it essentially promotes a decency and propriety of deportment, and stimulates to exertion. Whenever a young man is seen exhibiting an utter disregard for the approbation of others, the most unfavourable anticipations may be formed of him; he has annihilated one of the greatest restraints on an evil course which a kind Providence has implanted within us; and exposes himself to the hazard of unmistakable vice and misery. (T. C. Upham, *L.L.D.*) *Praise from others*:—The praises of others may be of use in teaching us, not what we are, but what we ought to be. (J. M. Hare.) *Commendation*:—The tendency of the love of commendation is to make a man extol himself; of the love of admiration to make him puff himself. (Archbishop Whately.) *Praise-worthiness*:—When the love of praise takes the place of love of praise-worthiness, the defect is fatal. (B. Grant, *B.A.*) *Commendation better than scolding*:—A word of praise warms the heart towards him who bestows it, and insensibly trains him who receives it to strive after what is praiseworthy; and as our lesser faults may be thus gently corrected, by disciplining some counter merits to stronger and steadier efforts to outgrow them, so it is, on the whole, not more pleasant than wise to keep any large expenditure of scolding for great occasions. But let me be understood. By praise I do not mean flattery; I mean nothing insincere. Insincerity alienates love and rots away authority. Praise is worth nothing if it be not founded on truth. (Lord Lytton.)

Ver. 9. Those things which ye have both learned and received.—Observe—I. THE APOSTLE'S EXAMPLE. He preached, practised, experienced the truth. II. ITS PERMANENT FORCE. Still heard and seen in the word of inspiration—accompanied with Divine power and blessing. (J. Lyth, *D.D.*) Observe—I. THE APOSTLE'S CONSCIOUS INTEGRITY. II. HIS BRIGHT EXAMPLE of faith, zeal, self-consecration, purity. III. ITS AUTHORITY AS A RULE. IV. THE ADVANTAGE OF COPYING IT. Peace on earth—in heaven. (*Ibid.*) *The force of example*:—During the siege of Sebastopol, Gordon was one day going the round of the trenches, when he heard an angry altercation between a corporal and a sapper. On inquiring the cause, he learnt that the men were instructed to place some gabions on the battery, and that the corporal had ordered the sapper to stand on the parapet, where he would be exposed to the enemy's fire, and to place the gabions, while he, perfectly sheltered, handed them up from below. Gordon at once jumped upon the parapet, ordering the corporal to join him, while the sapper handed them the gabions. When the work was done, and done under the fire of the watchful Russian gunners, Gordon turned to the corporal, and said, "Never order a man to do anything that you are afraid to do yourself."

Vers. 10-20. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly.—*Paul's gratitude*:—I. HE ACKNOWLEDGES THE GIFT—rejoicing in the spirit that prompted it; expressing his contentment and confidence in God; confessing the seasonable nature of the supply. II. HE COMMENDS THE GIVERS for their special and repeated generosity; exemplification of the spirit of Christianity; acceptable sacrifice to God. III. HE ASSURES THEM OF AN ABUNDANT RECOMPENSE. God is rich; will supply all their need; by Christ Jesus. (J. Lyth, *D.D.*) *A grateful heart*:—I. SEES GOD IN EVERY BENEVOLENT ACTION. II. REJOICES IN THE SPIRIT THAT DICTATES IT. III. PUTS THE HIGHEST VALUE ON THE GIFT. (*Ibid.*) *Philippian charity and Pauline delicacy*:—They had revived, he says, or more exactly—for the figure is taken from the beautiful burst of spring—they had, like a tree long bare and frost-bound, put forth new sprouts and shoots under the genial influence of God's rain and sunshine; they had thus sprouted and germinated afresh, after a season of apparent deadness, in their care or thought for him. But no sooner has he written the word than he feels, with that quickness and delicacy of perception which is one of the great charms of his character, that the expression may seem to involve a reproach for the lateness or tardiness of their offering; and therefore he adds instantly, that he knows that they had all along been thinking and caring for him, and had only wanted the opportunity of actually showing and proving it. For this he rejoiced in the Lord. Their kindness had given him a pleasure, not as a man only, but as a Christian. And he goes on to tell them why. (Dean Vaughan.) *Hearing and*

doing.—A brief and simple, but very expressive, eulogy was pronounced by Martin Luther upon a pastor at Zwickaw, in 1522, named Nicholas Hausman. "What we preach," said the great reformer, "He lives." A good woman who had been to the house of God was met on her way home by a friend, who asked her if the sermon was done. "No," she replied, "it is all said; it has got to be done." (*Biblical Treasury*.) *Importance of opportunity*.—Opportunity is like a favouring breeze springing up around a sailing-vessel. If the sails be all set, the ship is wafted onward to its port; if the sailors are asleep or ashore, the breeze may die again, and when they would go on they cannot: their vessel stands as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean. *Hesitation destructive*.—The beautiful *drosera*, or sun-dew, lifts its tiny crimson head. The delicate buds are clustered in a raceme, to the summit of which they climb one by one. The topmost bud waits only through twelve hours of a single day to open. If the sun do not shine it withers and droops, and gives way to the next aspirant. So it is with the human heart and its purposes. One by one they come to the point of blossoming. If the warmth of confidence and hope glow in the heart at the right moment, all is well; but the chill of hesitation or delay will wither them at the core. (J. Denton.)

Vers. 11-13. Not that I speak in respect of want.—*Contentment*.—I. THE GREAT LESSON. "I have learned," &c. Man might very correctly be distinguished as the discontented animal. 1. We are not content with life in its severer aspects. (1) We do not know how to be abased, neither are we instructed to be hungry. In the fields and woods we find organic life most responsive to changing environment—the spreading tree at the first chill beginning to modify its leaf, to retrench its branchery, to economize its flower; the bird of the orient at the first scent of a less genial air preparing to sacrifice in size or ornament to adjust itself to an altered sphere; but man rebels to accept a dress less rich or resources less abundant. (2) The apostle had learned this lesson of accepting adversity with noble cheerfulness. (2 Cor. iv. 8-9; vi. 9-10). How immense the distance between this and stoicism. That with its insensibility and hopelessness is the confession of inability to deal with the problem of suffering. Thousands since St. Paul have mastered the same lesson. A lovely child of wealthy parents was brought to the poet-artist Blake. Sitting in his old worn clothes, amidst poverty, he looked at her very kindly for a long while without speaking, and then gently stroking her long bright curls, said, "May God make this world to you, my child, as beautiful as it has been to me." 2. We are not content with life in its fairer aspects. (1) We do not know how to abound, neither are we instructed to be full. The fairy chorus of the bees in the limes is expressive of a sublime content, and the blackbird in the ripe cherry tree asks for nothing but to be let alone, a wasp half buried in a melting nectarine has forgotten its fretfulness, the chirp of the sparrow looking at a golden harvest sheaf rises into something like music; but man at his best estate is consumed with regrets and repinings. (2) The apostle has learned this lesson. The problem of affluence is one that many deep thinkers have had to give up. Oriental asceticism finding men full of power and wealth and yet unhappy thought the remedy lay in stripping life of its amenities. The same failure is confessed by Catholic monasticism, and by men like Thoreau. But the apostle found joy in all the gifts of God, and realized through them a still higher capacity and power of service and blessedness. 3. We are not content with life under any aspect. (1) A lady was out in the fields when her little daughter begged to gather wild flowers. Having gathered a nice few she murmured when the mother wished to continue her walk. "Well, get all in the field if you like," said the mother. Then for a while the eager creature ran about plucking the coveted things, only at last to burst into tears because she could not gather all. Thus is it ever with poor human nature. (2) Now in opposition to this, Paul has learned the difficult lesson thoroughly, and intimates that not only could he endure uniform prosperity or adversity, but could pass from the one to the other with serenity. It has been thought that our ancestors did not grumble so much at the vicissitudes of the climate as we do—they had not the same opportunity for instituting odious comparisons. It was not their custom to rush off to Cannes for a fortnight, or to contrast the ferocious frosts of the North with the balmy atmosphere of Palermo. The chief grumblers at the weather, we are told, are those who thus feel the force of the contrast. And, really, the severest trial of the faith and temper of men is in widely contrasted experiences. Much of the bitter discontent of our age is found in that strange mingling of riches and poverty, things grand and grievous in close succession. But Paul is undismayed by any

possible combination of events. He is not the victim of circumstances, but their master. He could be exalted without pride and abased without despair; full without presumption, empty without fretfulness. II. THE GRAND TEACHER. "I can do all things," &c. Let us see how Christ teaches the supreme art. 1. Christ sets man right within himself. We think our discontents are circumstantial, but really their origin is to be sought in the anarchy of the soul. Many philosophers have perceived this and have sorrowfully turned away from the painful problem, or confessing that the inner discord is incurable. This is Schopenhauer's position, but it is the work of Christ to do what he declares impossible. "Has there ever been a man in complete accord with himself?" asks the German. Yes, Paul, here. It is the unique work of Jesus Christ to restore purity, energy, harmony within our hearts. "A human being is the possibility of many contradictions," and it is the work of Christ to attune the subtle chords of our reasonable and immortal nature, and bring forth in our heart the music of heaven. 2. Christ makes clear to us the whole sphere of life. (1) Some modern sceptics teach contentment by narrowing the horizon, by denying our ideals and hopes, and thus strive to make life as prosaic as possible. If this could be done it would be a mighty misfortune. All civilization arises in the sense of discontent. As soon as the savage feels a sense of want, he has been started on the grand tour. The history of constitutional government is a noble discontent. That a man is discontented with his caste and seeks to improve himself raises the whole social order. Dissatisfaction with manual labour stimulates invention, and art, and science. Christ never attempts to contract our horizon, but mightily reinforces the romantic element in our nature. (2) But whilst Christ discovers to us the infinity of life, He teaches the relative importance of the sphere of the senses and of the spirit. We soon get to the end of the possibilities of sensual and social enjoyments. We can enjoy very little however vast our resources; having just so much nerve force, so much appetite, five senses, twenty-four hours in the day and sixty minutes to the hour. (3) But Christ opens to us a new world of ambition, and pleasure, and hope, in our moral life and destiny. Never does the New Testament give us any immoderate promises in the carnal sphere (1 Tim. vi. 6-8; Heb. xiii. 5). But out and beyond Christ opens to us boundless regions in which our nature may find fulness of joy. To destroy the larger thought and noble restlessness of the heart would leave man a maimed and wretched creature, and strike a blow at progress; but to leave man his instinct for greatness, his dreams of glory, his aspirations for knowledge, and power, and felicity, teaching him to expect his full satisfaction in the regions of his higher being and destiny is to fill him with sublime content. 3. Christ teaches us that all the events of this present life equally contribute to our personal and everlasting perfection. The apostle knew that the end of life was not more or less temporal good, but the hallowing of the spirit to God's love and service. "All things work together for good," &c. It was in that knowledge that Paul found deep reason for resignation. The finest races have a composite character. Who can analyse the elements of our own. Now Paul has got an insight into the analogous fact that the widest ranges of circumstance and experience would create the finest type of moral life. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Contentment in all things*:—There never was a pupil who graduated in any university with such a diploma as that. There never was penned such a record of attainment as the result of education. A man is educated just in the proportion in which by his soul-power he controls the conditions of life. An uneducated man is controlled by his conditions. What did Paul learn? I. To be content. But it was a very poor kind of learning if by content is meant stupidity, want of aspiration and enterprise. If Paul meant, I consider one thing or place just as good as another, poverty as good as riches, slavery as good as independence, he had learned nothing useful. But he did not mean that. He had learned to be content because he carried about with him that which made any circumstances blessed. Englishmen are laughed at because they travel on the continent with their household and all its comforts; and when they camp down in a poverty-stricken village they feel better off than if they had nothing but herbs and rocks to subsist upon; and so are content. Now suppose we imitate that inwardly, and carry in ourselves such a store of inspirations, such an amplitude of moral life as shall make us superior to every circumstance! When a man is living so near to God as to have his whole being pervaded with Divine power, why should he not say, I am content wherever He is. II. He was content in ALL THINGS. A great many have learned it in single things. 1. The mother says, loving her child, I am content. She will forsake exhilarating pleasures and enter.

taining friends for the nursery, and there she is happy. 2. There is a gay giddy girl, for whom is predicted no enviable future; but her time comes. When love finds her, and wakes her up to her true life, and she becomes a wife and mother, how all the frivolity is gone. She has learned to be content. Take her out of that and she has not learned the lesson. 3. There are others who would be perfectly content if they could have fortunes made or their ambition gratified. 4. But where are those who can say, "Put me where you will and I will make it a paradise. Give me children and I am happy; take them away and I have still that which will make me happy. Give me husband, wealth, learning, or deprive me of them, and I am content"? Here is one at any rate. III. He was content to ALTERNATE BETWEEN DIFFERENT STATES. Men get used to things, so that if you let them have one state of things long enough they will adapt themselves to it; or give them, if you change, time enough to get used to the next, they will continue to bear it. But Paul says, "I have learned both." It is as if a man were oscillating between the extremes of heat and cold, and in the sudden transition from one to the other should be content. Yet there is a power in the soul if rightly cultured that shall enable a man to pass from any state to another and say, "I am content." Here is a man who is reduced by an adverse stroke of fortune from affluence to beggary, and if he be a Christian what is to prevent him saying, "I have lost a little dust; but God is mine, Christ is mine, heaven is mine. The ocean is not spilled even if my cup is. My coat is very useful; but should it be stolen it is not I." Conclusion: 1. This is not a miraculous state. There are those who think that apostles do not belong to the common race. 2. This is not a superficial power, but one which requires developement. "I have learned." It took him forty years to learn it, and you must not be discouraged if you cannot all at once put on the virtues which were the result of forty years' experience. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The tendency of Christian principles to produce true contentment*:—There have been few persons whose patience and temper have been so severely tried as Paul's (2 Cor. xi. 26, 27), and as he writes he is a prisoner. Do not think, however, that he was not subject to the same infirmities as other men. So far was a contented disposition from being natural to him he tells us that he had acquired it. Where had he learned this lesson? At the feet of Gamaliel or from the heathen philosophers? These might have commended the virtue of contentment, and shown its reasonableness, and its necessity to happiness, but to put their followers in possession of it was not in their power. Paul learned it at the feet of Jesus, in the school of Christian experience, where we may learn it too. I. CHRISTIANITY TAKES AWAY THE NATURAL CAUSES OF DISCONTENT. 1. Pride. Men are naturally proud. They think nothing too good for them, and if anything be withheld it is not according to their deserts; hence discontent. Christianity removes this. Humility is its first lesson. The Christian has been convinced that he is a sinner, and his high thoughts, therefore, are overthrown. So far from having been treated worse than he deserves, he feels that he has been treated better. Pride therefore yields to humble gratitude. 2. Self-preference. We naturally love ourselves with excessive fondness. In comparison with our own affairs all others are of no value. While others possess advantages which we do not, or are free from troubles which we experience, envy naturally arises. Christianity regulates this self-love by commanding us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Those who do this are free from envy and repining and so are content. 3. Covetousness. Men have naturally a strong desire for the things of this world, and the more they have, the more they crave. Ahab was only like many others. Here Christianity brings a cure (Luke xii. 15). It reveals far more valuable riches than earth can give, which are sure and abiding, and knowing this he is content. II. IT FURNISHES VERY POWERFUL MOTIVES FOR THE EXERCISE OF A CONTENTED MIND. 1. The disciples of Christ are under the strongest obligations to walk in the footsteps of their Master. In His life contentedness was very conspicuous. No one ever had such provocations to discontent as He. Shall we, then, murmur at our light afflictions when Christ bore so much for us. 2. True Christians are convinced that their lot, whatever it may be, has been chosen for them by their Lord. Can they, then, be dissatisfied with the appointments of their Sovereign, whom they are bound to obey and serve? 3. Their lot has been chosen in infinite love to their souls. Christ knows what is best for His people, and will order all things for their good. With this conviction how can the real Christian be otherwise than contented. III. PRACTICAL USES. 1. For correcting the error that religion destroys cheerfulness. We see that its natural tendency is the very reverse. Look at the proud, selfish, or covetous man, and see what a miserable being he is.

Compare him with the tranquil apostle. Surely, then, that which promotes contentment cannot be destructive of happiness. 2. To stir up Christians to their duty. There are many who, on the whole, live under the influence of religion, who nevertheless when disappointed or afflicted betray impatience. The fact is pride, self-preference, &c., are not completely broken. Then call forth your principles into more lively exercise. What grace could do for Paul it can do for you. (*E. Cooper, M.A.*) *The school of Christ*.—I. WHAT THE BELIEVER CAN LEARN WHEN CHRIST TEACHES. 1. To be content amidst the world's changes. What a changeable life was that of St. Paul's from the time he left his father's house for Gamaliel's school to his imprisonment at Rome. We are all subject to disturbing changes from increase or loss of wealth, friends, position, &c., and only in the school of Christ is there rest for the soul. The believer has "the unsearchable riches," so nothing can impoverish him; peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, so nothing can fatally disturb him; is "kept by the power of God," so nothing can harm him. He may, therefore, well be content. 2. To be submissive amidst the world's trials. We all encounter a good deal that humbles us, but that is very different from learning how to be abased. This knowledge takes away half its burden and bitterness. Christ teaches this by encouraging us to cast our burden on Him, and by strengthening that faith which produces conformity to Him. 3. To be heavenly minded amidst the world's enjoyments. "I know how to abound." Count up your mercies and your trials and see which abounds. II. WHAT THE BELIEVER CAN DO WHEN CHRIST STRENGTHENS. 1. He can suffer the will of God. 2. He can vanquish his spiritual foes. 3. He can fulfil all his duties to God and man. (*W. Cadman, M.A.*)

Ver. 11. I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.—*Contentment*.—I. ITS NATURE. 1. It is opposed to dissatisfaction, and by submission to the hardships of life disarms them of half their power. It is too sensible to aim after impossibilities, or to increase the infelicities of life by fretfulness. A just mind is necessary to it, one who sees things as they are instead of through the distorting medium of a jaundiced eye. The injustice of mind accompanying pride produces peevishness, and that accompanying ambition petulance. 2. It is not, however, indifference or stupidity, although these sometimes pass for such. Minds too sluggish to think, hearts too insensible to feel, souls too selfish to do either, have neither sensibility nor sense to complain. But contentment can feel, hope, sigh; but its feelings are not allowed to run into fretfulness, and its sighs are often exchanged for smiles. If it cannot have what it would it will not brood over its disappointments, but brighten them by sweet submission. 3. It has no kinship with fatalism. When the calls of duty come in conflict with the desires for cherished sinfulness, it is no uncommon thing for a foolish sinner to say that his plans and actions can alter nothing; the real meaning of which he is too lazy to plan or act at all; so he misnames his vice the virtue of contentment. Paul's contentment, however, was to work, plan, pray. He did not submit beforehand, because he did not know beforehand; but when the event came he said, "I am content," *i.e.*, with the ascertained will of his Master. II. THE MODE OF ITS ACQUISITION. "I have learned," *i.e.*, as a lesson, and with difficulty, too. If we trace its experiences we shall find—1. A sensibility to the Divine hand. He saw God in his trials, and said, "Thy will be done." It is a very different thing to submit under the ills of life through a realization of their Divine appointment, and to submit from sullenness or stupidity. See, then, in them the God of all wisdom and goodness. 2. He hoped in God. No man can be contented without hope. This leads to contentedness in certain expectation of deliverance, if not here, by and by. "I know whom I have believed," &c. 3. He had his treasure in heaven; and if we have we can say, "Our light affliction which is but for a moment," &c., and so be content. And even in prosperity this consolation is required; for amidst abounding riches there is dissatisfaction. Something more is wanted. 4. He had experiences which tried him. His content did not arise from tuition, faith, hope, heavenly mindedness, alone or together. His painful experiences gave strength to his contentment, and made successive trials light and met more willingly. They taught him to say, "When I am weak I am strong; I can do all things through Christ," &c. III. THE REASONS WHICH ENFORCE IT. 1. The power which has allotted our state. God reigns. An inscrutable wisdom and overruling providence is at work. How unreasonable, then, to complain when trouble comes. It is either a deserved chastisement or a healthful discipline. Discontent is an injustice in high quarters. Take,

then, your happy place, it is your heavenly Father's appointment in love. 2. Contentment is safety. How many have suffered irretrievably through wandering from their allotted path, or wishing and striving to do so. The humblest cottage is better than a fever-stricken or earthquake-shaken palace. 3. Contentment enhances our enjoyment and diminishes our miseries. Evils become lighter by patient endurance, and benefits are poisoned by discontent. 4. The miseries of life are sufficiently deep and extensive without adding to them. 5. Contentment is the means of receiving new lessons about God. (*I. S. Spencer, D.D.*) *Contentment* signifies self-sufficiency. Here it is not to be understood absolutely as if it taught independence in nature, not wanting anything outside of self. Paul did not mean to exclude God or His providence, but supposed them—"not as if we were sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." He did not desire or lack more than what God had supplied him with. His will suited his state, his desire did not exceed his power. The object of contentment, then, is the present state of things, whatever it may be, wherein God has set us. Those of the highest fortune are most apt to respect the smallest things, whereas a poor estate is easily comforted by the accession of little. The formal object may seem to be a condition adverse to our sense—but since all men are in such a condition more or less, therefore any state may be the object of contentedness, and prince and peasant alike need to learn this lesson. To turn now to the acts wherein the practice consisted.

I. AS TO OUR OPINIONS AND JUDGMENTS. Contentedness requires that—1. We should believe our condition, whatever it may be, to be determined by God, or at least that He permits it according to His pleasure. 2. Hence we should judge everything that happens to be thoroughly good, worthy of God's appointment, and not entertain harsh thoughts of Him. 3. We should even be satisfied in our minds that according to God's purpose all events conduce to the welfare not only of things in general but to ours in particular. 4. Hence we are to believe that our present condition is, all things considered, the best—better than we could have devised for ourselves.

II. AS TO THE DEPOSITIONS OF WILL AND AFFECTION. 1. We should entertain all occurrences, how grievous soever, with entire submission to the will of God. 2. We should bear all things with steady calmness and composedness of mind, quelling those excesses of passion which the sense of things disgusting is apt to excite. 3. We should bear the worst events with sweet cheerfulness and not succumb to discouragement. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." 4. We should with faith and hope rely and wait on God for the removal or easement of our afflictions, or confide in Him for grace to support them well. "Why art thou cast down," &c. 5. We should not faint or languish. No adversity should impair the forces of our reason or spirit, enervate our courage, or slacken our industry. "If thou faint in adversity thy strength is small." 6. We should not be weary of our condition or have irksome longings for alterations, but with a quiet indifference and willingness lie under it during God's pleasure, considering "Him who endured such contradictions of sinners against Himself." 7. We should by adverse accidents be rendered lowly in our own eyes, meek in our temper, and sensible of our own unworthiness. "Be humble under the mighty hand of God." "To this man will I look," &c. 8. It is required that we should, notwithstanding any hardness in our condition, be kindly affected towards others, being satisfied and pleased with their more prosperous state. 9. Contentedness implies freedom from anxiety in reference to provision for our needs, "casting our burden on the Lord." 10. It requires that we should curb our desires, and not affect more in quantity or better in quality than our nature or state require. "He," as Socrates said, "is nearest to the gods (who need nothing) that needs fewest things." 11. It imports that whatever our condition is our mind and affections should be squared accordingly. If we are rich we should get a bountiful heart; if poor we should be frugal; if high in dignity, well ballasted; if low, meek and steady.

III. From hence should arise CORRESPONDENT EXTERNAL Demeanour. 1. We should restrain our tongues from all unseemly expressions implying displeasure at God's providence. "Wherefore doth a living man complain?" "Be still and know that I am God." 2. We should declare our satisfaction in God's dealings, acknowledging His wisdom, justice, and goodness, and blessing Him for all. 3. We should abstain from all unlawful courses towards the remedy of our needs, choosing quietly to abide under their presence rather than to violently relieve ourselves. 4. We should, notwithstanding adversity, proceed in our affairs with alacrity, courage, and industry, allowing no grievance to render us listless or lazy. Activity is a good way to divert and the readiest way to remove a good many ills. 5. We should behave

ourselves fairly and kindly towards the instruments of our adversity, "being reviled" we should "bless," &c. (*I. Barrow, D.D.*) *Christian contentment:—*

I. ITS SPHERE. It is exercised in different circumstances. 1. In the midst of competence, in which case it suppresses the strivings of ambition and envious murmurings on account of the successes of others. 2. Under hope deferred, in which case it teaches a patient waiting for God's time as the best. 3. Under pressure of adversity, from which there is no hope of escape in this world, in which case it represses fretfulness and a charging of God foolishly. **II. ITS QUALIFICATIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.** 1. It was his portion of worldly goods with which the apostle was content—not with his spiritual condition. This would have been sin. With this we should be discontented. Nor is this inconsistent with gratitude for grace received. The contentment of an unrenowned man is a great aggravation of his sinfulness. But while discontented on account of the evil of your own heart, be not discontented with the slow operations of God's sanctifying grace, so as to fret and fume that you are not already perfect. 2. Contentment with our worldly condition is not inconsistent with endeavour to have it improved. (1) To the poorest man Christianity says, "Be thou content," but also, "be diligent in business" (1 Cor. vii. 21). The contentment enjoined is for the time being. The man is poor to-day, and for this day faith enjoins him to be satisfied. But deliverance from poverty may be best for to-morrow, and he therefore works for his extrication. He may not succeed, but he says it appears to be best that poverty should be continued another day, and thus he proceeds till relief comes. (2) Some persons of a tender but mistaken conscience feel as if it were a sin to attempt to rise. This is foolish. It is our commanded duty to endeavour to improve our circumstances, only we must not murmur if we do not succeed. (3) There are those who presume to denounce people when they agitate for the repeal of bad laws—preaching the Christian duty of content. That contentment is a part of duty is granted. Iniquitous legislation is as much a permitted judgment of God as famine, and during the time of its infliction we must humble ourselves. But in both cases a man is a criminal who does not use all means for the removal of the curse. What would have been our condition but for a noble Christian patriotism. 3. This contentment is relative to our present state, and not absolute in respect to the entire demands of our nature. The Christian is content with his supplies as a pilgrim. To be satisfied with the world as a home is sinful. It is well enough as a land to travel in, but I expect something better. **III. THE MANNER IN WHICH IT IS TO BE CHERISHED.** 1. Let us reflect that whatever our circumstances they are the arrangement of the providence of God, who has a sovereign right to dispose of us. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of earth, but woe to him that contendeth with his Maker." 2. It is requisite that we should acquire a habit of looking at the favourable as well as the adverse side. If you are poor, God has given you your health; if He has taken two of your children He has spared a third; some of your neighbours are worse off; at the worst you have your Bible and your Saviour. 3. Supposing our lives were affliction throughout, still we would deserve worse. 4. God designs our advantage in every calamity. Christian hope is the secret of Christian contentment. (*W. Anderson, LL.D.*) *Helps to contentment:—*

I. CONSIDERATION. 1. Of the special matter of it. (1) Who orders the state, and how is it ordered? (Psa. xxxi. 15). God orders things (a) irresistibly (Isa. xlii. 13; Eccles. viii. 3; Ephes. i. 11); (b) righteously (Gen. xviii. 25; Psa. cxlv. 17; Rev. xv. 3); (c) wisely (Psa. civ. 24); (d) graciously (Psa. xxv. 10). (2) The state itself. (a) It is mixed—the good more than the evil; the evil is our desert and the good of grace. (b) It is common (1 Cor. x. 13; 1 Pet. v. 9). (c) It is proper to this present life, which is but a pilgrimage. (d) It might be worse. (3) The frame of contentment. (a) It is a gracious frame. (b) It is a frame highly pleasing to God. (c) It is a frame greatly advantageous to ourselves. It fills with comfort; fits for duty; procures the mercy we desire, or something better; sweetens every cup. Whereas discontent is a sad inlet to sin; a preparation to all temptations; deprives of happiness; exposes to judgments (Psa. cvi. 24–27; 1 Cor. x. 10). 2. Of particular cases where consideration is to be acted upon in order to contentment. (1) Lowness of estate. Is extreme poverty the case? consider then—(a) The Lord maketh poor and rich (1 Sam. ii. 7). (b) None are so poor but they have more than they deserve. (c) Hitherto the Lord hath provided, and if you trust Him will still provide (Psa. lxxiii. 3; Matt. vi. 25; Heb. xiii. 5). (d) A little with God's blessing will go far and do well (Exod. xxiii. 25; 1 Kings xvii. 12). (e) The saint's little is better than the sinner's all (Prov.

xv. 16; Psa. xxxvii. 16). (f) No man can judge of God's love or hatred by these things (Eccles. ix. 1; Matt. viii. 20; 2 Cor. viii. 9). (g) God keeps you low in earthly possessions, but how is it with you in higher and better things (Rev. ii. 9; James ii. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 18; Luke xii. 21). (h) You think God is strait with you in temporal, but is He not abundantly gracious in spiritual things? (2) There are some with whom it is much better. Consider in your case—(a) The greatness of the sin of discontent in you above what it is in the persons spoken of before. (b) How thankful would many be if they were in your position. (c) Christians are to bound their desires after things below (Jer. xlv. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 8; Matt. vi. 11). (d) A little sufficeth nature, less sufficeth grace; but covetousness is never satisfied. (e) A great estate is not the best estate (Prov. xxx. 8) for duty (Eccles. v. 13); for safety—the higher the building the more endangered; for comfort. (f) The contented man is never poor let him have ever so little; the discontented never rich let him have ever so much. (g) What are earthly treasures that we should be greedy of them? (1 Tim. vi. 17; Prov. xxiii. 5). (h) The less we have, the less we shall have to account for. (3) There are those who have lost what they had. Consider—(a) God's hand is in losses (Job i. 21). (b) Something is gone, but possibly all is not lost. (c) Did you really need them? (1 Pet. i. 6). (d) Suppose all is lost, it amounts to little (1 Cor. vii. 31). (e) If thou be a child of God the best is secure. 3. The manner in which consideration is to be managed. It must be—(1) Frequent. (2) Speedy. (3) Serious. II. GODLINESS. This produces contentment. 1. As it rectifies the several faculties of the soul. (1) It rectifies the understanding, by dispelling natural darkness and setting up a saving light. (2) It rectifies the will; causing it to comply with the will of God. (3) It rectifies the affections; taking away their inordinancy towards earthly things and keeping them with true bounds. (4) It makes the conscience good (Prov. xv. 15). 2. As it makes a person to have a powerful sense of God's glory, so as always to rest in that as his ultimate and most desirable good. 3. In the general habit of grace there are special graces which further contentment. (1) Humility. (2) Faith. (3) Repentance. (4) Heavenly mindedness. (5) Self-denial. III. PRAYER. Upon this the two others depend. It furthers contentment. 1. As it gives a vent to the mind under trouble. 2. As it obtains grace and strength from God. (*T. Jacomb, D.D.*) *Learning to be content*:—These words signify how contentedness may be attained. It is not an endowment innate to us, but it is a product of discipline—"I have learned." It was a question of Plato, whether virtue is to be learned. St. Paul plainly resolves it by the testimony of his experience. It however requires great resolution and diligence in conquering our desires; hence it is an art which few study. I. IN REGARD TO GOD, we may consider that equity exacts, gratitude requires, and reason dictates that we should be content; or that, in being discontented, we behave ourselves unbeseemingly and unworthily, are very unjust, ungrateful, and foolish towards Him. 1. The point of equity considered, according to the gospel rule, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" 2. That of gratitude; inasmuch as we have no right or title to anything; all we have coming from God's pure bounty and designed for our good. 3. That of reason; because it is most reasonable to acquiesce in God's choice of our estate, He being infinitely more wise than we are; loves us better than we love ourselves; and has a right to dispose of us as He pleases. II. IN REGARD TO OURSELVES we may observe much reason for contentment. 1. As men and creatures, we are naturally indigent and impotent; have no just claim to anything, nor can maintain anything by our own power. Wherefore how little soever is allowed us no wrong is done and no reason to complain. 2. And on a moral account we have still less. (1) As sinners we are obnoxious to wrath and should therefore complain of nothing. (2) We are God's servants and shall a mere servant, or slave, presume to choose his place, or determine his rank in the family? Is it not fit that these things should be left to the Master's discretion and pleasure? (3) Again, if we consider ourselves as the children of God by birth and nature, or by adoption and grace, how can we be discontented with anything? III. IF WE CONSIDER OUR CONDITION, be it what it may, we can have no reasonable ground for discontent. 1. Our state cannot if rightly considered and well managed be insupportable. The defect of some things is supplied by other enjoyments. If we think highly of some things no wonder our condition is unpleasant if we want them; and if we consider others mighty evils, if they come upon us we can hardly escape being displeased; but if we estimate all things according to the dictates of true reason, we shall find that neither the absence of the one nor the presence of the other is deplorable. (1) Take poverty;

that is, the absence of a few superfluous things which please our fancy rather than answer our need, and without which nature is easily satisfied. (2) Take his case who has fallen from honour into contempt; that may be only a change in the opinion of giddy men, the breaking of a bubble, the changing of the wind. (3) Take him who is slandered; is not every man subject to this? and the greatest and wisest most exposed to it? Or is thy reproach just? Then improve this dealing and make it wholesome. (4) Take him who is disappointed and crossed in his undertakings. Why art thou disquieted on this score? Didst thou build much expectation on uncertainties? Didst thou not foresee a possibility that thy design might miscarry? and if so, why art thou not prepared to receive what happeneth? (5) Take one who has met with unkindness and ingratitude from friends. Such misbehaviour, however, is more their calamity than ours. The loss of bad friends is no damage, but an advantage. (6) Take him who mourns the death of friends. Can he, after all, lose his best friend? Neither is it loss which he laments but only separation for a short time. He is only gone as taking a little journey. But—(7) It may perhaps displease us, that the course of this world does not go right, or according to our mind; that justice is not well dispensed, virtue not duly considered, industry not sufficiently rewarded; but favour, partiality, flattery, craft, and corruption, carry all before them. Yet why should this displease thee? Art thou guilty of contributing to it? then mend it thyself: if not, then bear it; for so it always hath been, and ever will be. Yet God is engaged competently to provide for us. God observeth this course of things, yet He permits it. But He has appointed a judgment hereafter.

2. As there is no condition here perfectly and purely good, so there is none so thoroughly bad, that it has not somewhat convenient and comfortable therein. Seldom or never all good things forsake a man at once, and in every state there is some compensation for evil. We should not pore over small inconveniences and overlook benefits. This hinders us reaping satisfaction in all other things.

3. Is our condition so extremely bad that it might not be worse? Surely not. God's providence will not suffer it. There are succours always ready against extremities—our own wit and industry; the pity and help of others. When all is gone we may keep the inestimable blessing of a good conscience, have hope in God, enjoy His favour. Why, then, are we discontented.

4. Then look at the uses of adversity—the school of wisdom, the purifying furnace of the soul, God's method of reclaiming sinners, the preparation for heaven. Who ever became great or wise or good without adversity.

5. Whatever our state it cannot be lasting. Hope lies at the bottom of the worst state that can be. "Take no thought for the morrow." Mark the promises that none who hope in God shall be disappointed. And then death will end it all and heaven compensate for all earthly ills.

IV. CONSIDER THE WORLD AND THE GENERAL STATE OF MEN HERE.

1. Look on the world as generally managed by men. Art thou displeased that thou dost not prosper therein? If thou art wise thou wilt not grieve, for perhaps thou hast no capacity nor disposition. This world is for worldlings.

2. We are indeed very apt to look upward towards those few, who, in supposed advantages of life, seem to surpass us, and to repine at their fortune; but seldom do we cast down our eyes on those innumerable good people, who lie beneath us in all manner of accommodations; whereas if we would consider the case of most men, we should see abundant reason to be satisfied with our own.

3. If even we would take care diligently to compare our state with that of persons whom we are most apt to admire and envy, it would often afford matter of consolation and contentment to us.

4. It may induce us to be content, if we consider what commonly hath been the lot of good men in the world. Scarcely is there recorded in holy Scripture any person eminent for goodness, who did not taste deeply of wants and distresses—even our Lord. Have all these then, "of whom the world was not worthy," undergone all sorts of inconvenience, being "destitute, afflicted, tormented;" and shall we disdain, or be sorry to be in such company?

V. CONSIDER THE NATURE OF THE DUTY ITSELF.

1. It is the sovereign remedy for all poverty and suffering; removing them or allaying the mischief they can do us.

2. Its happiness is better than any arising from secular prosperity. Satisfaction springing from rational content, virtuous disposition, is more noble, solid, and durable than any fruition of worldly goods can afford.

3. Contentment is the best way of bettering our condition, disposing us to employ advantages as they occur, and securing God's blessing (*Isaac Barrow, D.D.*)

The best lesson (Children's sermon):—The world is a school, and we have to learn our lessons in it. The best lesson we can learn is contentment.

I. WHY IT IS THE BEST LESSON.

1. Because it makes those who learn it happy. Nothing in the

world can make a discontented person happy. There was a boy once who only wanted a marble; when he had the marble, he only wanted a ball; when he had a ball, he only wanted a top; when he had a top, he only wanted a kite: and when he had marble, ball, top, and kite, he was not happy. There was a man once who only wanted money; when he had money, he only wanted a house; when he had a house, he only wanted land; when he had land, he only wanted a coach; but when he had money, house, land, and coach, he wanted more than ever. I remember, when I was a boy, reading a fable about a mouse that went to a spring with a sieve to carry some water in it. He dipped the sieve in the water, but, of course, as soon as he raised it up the water all ran through. He tried it over and over again, but still no water would stay in the sieve. The poor mouse hadn't sense enough to know where the trouble was. He never thought about the holes in the sieve. The fable said that while the mouse was still trying, in vain, to get some water in the sieve to carry home, there came a little bird and perched on a branch of the tree that grew near the spring. He saw the trouble the poor mouse was in, and kindly sung out a little advice to him in these simple words:

"Stop it with moss, and daub it with clay, and then you may carry it all away."

Trying to make a discontented person happy is like trying to fill a sieve with water. However much you pour into it, it all runs out just as fast as you pour it in. If you want to fill the sieve, you must stop the holes up. Then it will be easy enough to fill it. Just so it is with trying to make discontented people happy. It is impossible to make them happy while they are discontented. You must stop up the holes; you must take away their discontent, and then it is very easy to make them happy. If we were in Paradise, as Adam and Eve were, we should not be happy unless we learned to be content. Nay, if we were in heaven even, as Satan and the fallen angels once were, we should be unhappy without contentment. It was because Paul had learned this lesson that he could be happy, and sing for joy, when he was in a dungeon, and his back was all bleeding from the cruel stripes laid upon it. 2. Because it makes those who learn it useful. When people or things are content to do or be what God made them for, they are useful: when they are not content with this, they do harm. God made the sun to shine; the sun is content to do just what God made it for, and so it is very useful. God made the little brooks to flow through the meadows, giving drink to the cattle, and watering the grass and the roots of the trees, so as to make them green, and help them to grow. While they do this they are very useful. But suppose they should stop flowing, and spread themselves over the fields, they would do a great deal of harm. God made our hearts to keep beating, and sending the blood all over our bodies. While they are content to do this, they are very useful. Let them only stop beating, and we should die. II. WHY WE SHOULD LEARN IT. 1. Because God puts us where we are. God puts all things in the places where they are. The sun and moon and stars in the sky, the birds in the air, the fish in the sea, the trees in the woods, the grass in the fields, the stones and metals in the earth. He knows best where to put things. When people try to change what God has done, because they think they can arrange things better, they always make a mistake. 2. Because God wants us to learn it. This we know (1) from what He has said (1 Tim. vi. 8; Heb. xiii. 5). (2) From what He has done. He has filled the world with examples of contentment. All things that God has made are content to be where He has put them, except the children of Adam. God has done more for us than for any other of His creatures. We ought to be the most contented of all, and yet we are generally the most discontented. The fish are content with the water; the birds are content with the air. The eagle, as he soars to the sun, is content with his position; and so is the worm that crawls in its slime, or the blind mole that digs its way in darkness through the earth. All the trees of the forest are content to grow where God put them. The lily of the valley is content with its lowly place, and so is the little flower that blooms unnoticed on the side of the bleak mountain. Wherever you look you may see examples of contentment. Only think of the grass. It is spread all over the earth. It is mowed down continually; it is trodden on and trampled under foot all the time; and yet it always has a bright, cheerful, contented look. It is a beautiful image of contentment. 3. Because Jesus learned and practised it. It must have been very hard for Jesus to be content with the way in which He lived in this world, because it was so totally different from what He had been accustomed to before He came into it. A bird that has been hatched and brought up in a cage may be contented with its position, and live happily in its little wire prison. The reason

is that it has never known anything better. But take a bird that has been accustomed to its liberty in the open air, and shut it up in a small cage. It cannot be contented there. It will strike its wings against the cage, and stretch its neck through the wires, and show in this way how it longs for the free air of heaven again. Just so a person who was born and brought up in a garret or cellar, and who has never known anything better, may manage to be content there. But one who has lived in a beautiful palace for many years would find it very hard to live in a damp, dark cellar, among thieves and beggars. But Jesus lived in heaven before He came here. There He had everything that He wanted. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The condition of contentment*:—To be contented is to be contained, to be within limits. Whatever is within limits is likely to be quiet. A walled garden is one of the quietest places in the world; its high walls are a sign of contentment; within them are so many attractions and objects of delight; the world is shut out, and through the great gates one can look out upon it with all the affectionateness of distance and all the enchantment borrowed therefrom. An enclosed garden is a calm, quiet place, a place in which to be content. So, the soul of man, being as it were in an enclosed garden, man's spirit being within limits, is thus shut into a calm, quiet, sunny content. Now there are limits which a man need not trouble himself much about making; the walls of circumstances will build themselves about you. But if you are a very wise man you will give up scraping when you have got enough, and put yourself within limits. Just as an enclosed garden becomes a place of peace and delight, so the spirit should have limits round it and let those limits become grounds of quietness, reasons of peace and content, a content which leads a man to be easy, within these walls to be so satisfied as not to pine, fret, complain, fuss, kick, or go to the gates and scream for deliverance, asking passers by, "Did you ever see such a woe as mine." The contented man limited and bound by circumstances, makes those very limits the cure of his restlessness. The warrior and conqueror is not content, but seeks to add kingdom to kingdom. The miser is not content with much, but seeks to make more money. It is not whether your garden is one rood or three acres, but what you should remember is that there is a wall, that so living within bounds, be they large or small, you may possess a quiet spirit and a happy heart. Things would then serve you, instead of your being the miserable servant of circumstances. You would then make life bring tribute to its King, instead of doing as people do, hire themselves out as servants to their goods, as waiters upon their chattels; allowing things to ride over them instead of their being masterful over things. A man should be within bounds, but within those bounds there is room for pleasure and service. (*G. Dawson, M.A.*) *Contentment* is not one of the distinct and separate sensibilities of the heart, standing by itself and to be examined and understood alone, so much as it is a general sensibility which mingles with and tempers all others—which spreads its cast and character over the whole. It is not the rock on the landscape nor the rill—it is not the distant mountain of fading blue which loses its head in the heavens—it is not the tree, or the flower, or the contrast between light and shade, or that indescribable something which seems to give it life, as if the grass grew, and the flowers breathed, and the winds were singing some song of pleasure or sighing some mournful requiem. It is none of these. These can be more clearly described. But it is rather that softness, that mellow light, which lies over the whole—which sleeps on rock, and river, and tree, on the bosom of the distant mountain, and on the bosom of the humble violet that blushes in the sweetness of its lowly valley. Content is a general cast of sensibility which lies all over the heart. (*I. S. Spencer, D.D.*) *Contentment the outcome of a right view of circumstances*:—"How dismal you look," said a bucket to his companion as they were going to the well. "Ah!" replied the other, "I was reflecting on the uselessness of our being filled; for, let us go away ever so full, we always come back empty." "Dear me! how strange to look at it in this way," said the bucket. "Now I enjoy the thought, that however empty we come, we always go back full. Only look at it in that light, and you will be as cheerful as I am." *St. Paul's contentment*:—"If his trials were clouds upon his heavens, his contentment was the deep sunlight in which they bathed; and, just like the clouds of an evening sky, they made the heavens more beautiful than if no clouds were there. (*I. S. Spencer, D.D.*) *Contentment does not always imply pleasure*:—"I may be content; that is to say, I may have a calm patience in waiting over night at a miserable inn where have congregated smugglers, and drunken sailors, and the riff-raff of a bad neighbourhood. If, after fighting for my life in my little yacht, I had at last been driven up on shore, myself a wreck, and had crawled out of the

water, and staggered to the light, and gone in there, would it not be proper for me to say: "I thank God for my deliverance and for my safety"? And yet every element is distasteful to me. The air reeks with bad liquor and worse oaths; and the company are obscene, and vile, and violent; the conditions are detestable; but I that have escaped from the sea can say: "I am content to be here. Not that I am pleased at being there particularly; but as compared with something else it is tolerable. I have learned how to bear this." How did I learn it? I learned it by being swirled around for an hour in the whirlpools of the sea. I learned it by being thumped and pounded by the waves. I learned it by being chilled to the very marrow. So I learned to be patient with the surroundings in the midst of which I found myself. But it does not follow that a man is obliged to say: "I like these circumstances," in order to be content with them. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Contentment looks at what is left.—Am I fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators who have taken all from me? What now? Let me look about me. They have left me the sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me, and I can still discourse; and unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance, and a cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; they have still left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the gospel, and my religion, and the hopes of heaven, and my charter to them too; and still I sleep and digest, I eat and drink, I read and meditate, I can walk in my neighbours' pleasant fields and see the varieties of natural beauties, and delight in all which God delights—that is, in virtue and wisdom; in the whole creation, and in God Himself. And he who hath so many causes of joy, is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness who loses all these pleasures, and chooses to sit down on his little handful of thorns. (*Jeremy Taylor.*)

Contentment not found in an exchange of places.—In a room, there was a gold fish, in a glass globe, in water; and there was a canary up in a cage by the window. It was a very hot day; and the fish in the globe, and the canary in the cage began talking (of course you know in fables anything can talk). The fish said, "I wish I could sing like that canary. I should like to be up there in that cage." And the canary, who was uncommonly hot, said, "Oh, how nice to be down in that cool water where the fish is!" Suddenly a voice said, "Canary, go down to the water! Fish go up into the cage!" Immediately they both exchanged places. Weren't they happy? Wasn't the fish happy up in the cage? Wasn't the canary happy down in the cool water? How long did their happiness last, do you think? Ah! God had given to the canary and the fish "according to their ability." He had given each a place suited to their natures. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

Bad might be worse.—For every bad there might be a worse; and when a man breaks his leg, let him be thankful it was not his neck. (*Bishop Hall.*)

Contentment not inconsistent with discontent.—No doctrine of contentment must be so taught as to lessen a man's labours in the removal of his miseries and the improvement of his state. Contentment is of the spirit, and should be no discouragement to labour. If I have only one coat to my back, am I to sit down and say, "I am perfectly content"? No. I must be content with one whilst I have but one, but my contentment must not hinder me from trying to see my way to get two. Cinderella, while among the ashes, was content in spirit, though she strove to get out of the nastiness of the ashes. But I see people sometimes who are so friendly with their miserable circumstances that they never want to mend them—men at home with dirt and women with slovenliness, until they come to like it. It is true that if you have got to live with an ugly person you must try to settle down; but not with dirt, disease, ignorance, poverty. Under no plea of contentment should a man refuse the lawful means of enlargement and betterment. If you took possession of a new garden and allowed it to remain always full of weeds, and then if you took me round and said, "I have been here so many years; my garden is always full of weeds, but I am perfectly content"—my duty then would be to worry you, and try to make you discontented. A man who is content in the midst of a weedy garden is ingloriously content; he lets his circumstances degrade him. No wise contentment bears for one moment longer than is necessary a removable misery. It is our duty rather to unite with the utmost care for the healing of the wound, the patientest bearing of the suffering from the wound. He who, having a wound, did not seek to cure it, would degrade himself; but he who, while patiently bearing the necessary wound, seeks to cure it, is a contented man. (*G. Dawson, M.A.*)

Content not found in circumstances.—I knew a man that had both health and riches, and several houses all beautiful and ready finished; and would often trouble himself and family to be removing from one house to

another; and being asked by a friend why, replied: "It was to find content in some one of them." But his friend, knowing his temper, told him if he would find content in any of his houses he must leave himself behind him; for content will never dwell but in a meek and quiet soul. And this may appear from the beatitude—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" not that the meek shall not also obtain mercy, and see God, and be comforted, and at last obtain the kingdom of heaven; but in the meantime he, and he only, possesses the earth, as he travels towards that kingdom, by being humble and cheerful and content with what his good God has allotted him. (*Izaak Walton.*) *The art of divine contentment*.—I. I begin with the first: **THE SCHOLAR AND HIS PROFICIENCY**—"I have learned." Out of which I shall, by the by, observe two things by way of paraphrase. 1. The apostle doth not say, "I have heard that in every estate I should be content," but "I have learned." It is one thing to hear and another thing to learn, as it is one thing to eat and another thing to concoct. St. Paul was a practitioner. Christians hear much, but, it is to be feared, learn little. There are two things which keep us from learning. 1. Slighting what we hear. Who will learn that which he thinks is scarce worth learning? 2. Forgetting what we hear. II. This word, "I have learned," is a word imports difficulty; IT SHOWS HOW HARDLY THE APOSTLE CAME BY CONTENTMENT OF MIND; it was not bred in nature. The business of religion is not so facile as most do imagine. There are two pregnant reasons why there must be so much study and exertion. 1. Because spiritual things are against nature. 2. Because spiritual things are above nature. III. I come to the main thing, **THE LESSON ITSELF**—"In whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." 1. It is a hard lesson. The angels in heaven have not learned it; they were not contented. They kept not their estate because they were not contented with their estate. Our first parents, clothed with the white robe of innocency in paradise, had not learned to be content; they had aspiring hearts. O then, if this lesson was so hard to learn in innocency, how hard shall we find it who are clogged with corruption? 2. It is of universal extent; it concerns all. (1) It concerns rich men. Rich men have their discontents as well as others! (2) The doctrine of contentment concerns poor men. It is much when poverty hath clipped our wings then to be content, but, though hard, it is excellent; and the apostle here had "learned in every state to be content." A contented spirit is like a watch: though you carry it up and down with you, yet the spring of it is not shaken nor the wheels out of order, but the watch keeps its perfect motion. So it was with St. Paul. Though God carried him into various conditions, yet he was not lift up with the one, nor cast down with the other; the spring of his heart was not broken, the wheels of his affections were not disordered, but kept their constant motion towards heaven; still content. The ship that lies at anchor may sometimes be a little shaken, but never sinks; flesh and blood may have its fears and disquiets, but grace doth check them; a Christian, having cast anchor in heaven, his heart never sinks; a gracious spirit is a contented spirit. IV. **THE RESOLVING OF SOME QUESTIONS.** For the illustration of this doctrine I shall propound these questions. 1. Whether a Christian may not be sensible of his condition, and yet be contented? Yes; for else he is not a saint, but a stoic. 2. Whether a Christian may not lay open his grievances to God, and yet be contented? 3. What is it properly that contentment doth exclude? There are three things which contentment doth banish out of its diocese, and which can by no means consist with it. (1) It excludes a vexatious repining; this is properly the daughter of discontent. Murmuring is nothing else but the scum which boils off from a discontented heart. (2) It excludes an uneven discomposure: when a man saith, "I am in such straits that I know not how to evolve or get out, I shall be undone;" when his head and heart are so taken up that he is not fit to pray or meditate. (3) It excludes a childish despondency; and this is usually consequent upon the other. A despondent spirit is a discontented spirit. V. **SHOWING THE NATURE OF CONTENTMENT.** The nature of this will appear more clear in these three aphorisms. 1. Contentment is a divine thing; it becomes ours, not by acquisition, but infusion; it is a slip taken off from the tree of life, and planted by the Spirit of God in the soul; it is a fruit that grows not in the garden of philosophy, but is of a heavenly birth; it is therefore very observable that contentment is joined with godliness, and goes in equipage; "godliness with contentment is great gain." 2. Contentment is an intrinsic thing; it lies within a man; not in the bark, but the root. Contentment hath both its fountain and stream in the soul. The beam hath not its light from

the air; the beams of comfort which a contented man hath do not arise from foreign comforts, but from within. 3. Contentment is a habitual thing; it shines with a fixed light in the firmament of the soul. Contentment doth not appear only now and then, as some stars which are seen but seldom; it is a settled temper of the heart. It is not casual, but constant. Aristotle, in his rhetoric, distinguisheth between colours in the face that arise from passion and those which arise from complexion; the pale face may look pale when it blusheth, but this is only a passion. He is said properly to be ruddy and sanguine who is constantly so; it is his complexion. He is not a contented man who is so upon an occasion, and perhaps when he is pleased, but who is so constantly; it is the habit and complexion of his soul. VI. REASONS PRESSING TO HOLY CONTENTMENT. 1. The first is God's precept. It is charged upon us as a duty: "Be content with such things as you have." 2. The second reason enforcing contentment is God's promise, for He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Here God hath engaged Himself under hand and seal for our necessary provisions. True faith will take God's single bond without calling for witnesses. 3. Be content by virtue of a decree. Not chance or fortune, as the purblind heathens imagined; no, it is the wise God that hath by His providence fixed me in this orb. We stand off in our own light; if we should sort or parcel out our own comforts, we should hit upon the wrong. Is it not well for the child that the parent doth choose for it? were it left to itself, it would perhaps choose a knife to cut its own finger. A man in a paroxysm calls for wine, which, if he had it, were little better than poison; it is well for the patient that he is at the physician's appointment. God sees, in His infinite wisdom, the same condition is not convenient for all; that which is good for one may be bad for another; one season of weather will not serve all men's occasions—one needs sunshine, another rain; one condition of life will not fit every man no more than one suit of apparel will fit everybody; prosperity is not fit for all, nor yet adversity. VII. SHOWING HOW A CHRISTIAN MAY MAKE HIS LIFE COMFORTABLE. It shows how a Christian may come to lead a comfortable life, even a heaven upon earth, be the times what they will, by Christian contentment. A drop or two of vinegar will sour a whole glass of wine. Let a man have the affluence and confluence of worldly comforts, a drop or two of discontent will imbitter and poison all. Contentation is as necessary to keep the life comfortable as oil is necessary to keep the lamp burning; the clouds of discontent do often drop the showers of tears. Why dost thou complain of thy troubles. It is not trouble that troubles, but discontent; it is not the water without the ship, but the water that gets within the leak, which drowns it; it is not outward affliction that can make the life of a Christian sad; a contented mind would sail above these waters, but when there's a leak of discontent open, and trouble gets into the heart, then it is disquieted and sinks. Do therefore as the mariners, pump the water out and stop the spiritual leak in thy soul, and no trouble can hurt thee. VIII. A CHECK TO THE DISCONTENTED CHRISTIAN. Every man is complaining that his estate is no better, though he seldom complains that his heart is no better. How is it that no man is contented? Very few Christians have learned St. Paul's lesson. Neither poor nor rich know how to be content; they can learn anything but this. 1. If men are poor, they learn to be envious; they malign those that are above them. Another's prosperity is an eye-sore. 2. If men are rich, they learn to be covetous. God will supply our wants, but must He satisfy our lusts too? Many are discontented for a very trifle; another hath a better dress, a richer jewel, a newer fashion. Nero, not content with his empire, was troubled that the musician had more skill in playing than he. IX. A SUASIVE TO CONTENTMENT. It exhorts us to labour for contentation; this is that which doth beautify and bespangle a Christian, and as a spiritual embroidery doth set him off in the eyes of the world. God is pleased sometimes to bring His children very low and cut them short in their estate; it fares with them as with that widow who had nothing in her house "save a pot of oil": but be content. 1. God hath taken away your estate, but not your portion. Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her. 2. Perhaps, if thy estate had not been lost, thy soul had been lost; outward comforts do often quench inward heat. God can bestow a jewel upon us, but we fall so in love with it, that we forget Him that gave it. What pity is it that we should commit idolatry with the creature! Be content. If God dam up our outward comforts, it is that the stream of our love may run faster another way. 3. If your estate be small, yet God can bless a little. It is not how much money we have, but how much blessing. 4. You

did never so thrive in your spiritual trade; your heart was never so low as since your condition was low; you were never so poor in spirit, never so rich in faith. You did never run the ways of God's commandments so fast as since some of your golden weights were taken off. 5. Be your losses what they will in this kind, remember in every loss there is only a suffering, but in every discontent there is a sin, and one sin is worse than a thousand sufferings. The sixth apology that discontent makes is disrespect in the world. I have not that esteem from men as is suitable to my quality and grace. And doth this trouble? Consider—The world is an unequal judge; as it is full of change, so of partiality. Discontent arising from disrespect savours too much of pride; an humble Christian hath a lower opinion of himself than others can have of him. The next apology is, I meet with very great sufferings for the truth. Your sufferings are not so great as your sins. Put these two in the balance and see which weighs heaviest; where sin lies heavy, sufferings lie light. The next apology is the prosperity of the wicked. Well, be contented; for remember—1. These are not the only things, nor the best things; they are mercies without the pale. 2. To see the wicked flourish is matter rather of pity than envy; it is all the heaven they must have. "Woe to ye that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." The next apology that discontent makes is lowness of parts and gifts. I cannot (saith the Christian) discourse with that fluency, nor pray with that elegance, as others. Grace is beyond gifts. Thou comparest thy grace with another's gifts, there is a vast difference. Grace without gifts is infinitely better than gifts without grace. The twelfth apology that discontent makes for itself is this, It is not my trouble that troubles me, but it is my sins that do disquiet and discontent me. Be sure it be so. Do not prevaricate with God and thy own soul. In true mourning for sin when the present suffering is removed, yet the sorrow is not removed. But suppose the apology be real, that sin is the ground of your discontent; yet, I answer, a man's disquiet about sin may be beyond its bounds in these three cases. 1. When it is disheartening, that is, when it sets up sin above mercy. 2. When sorrow is indisposing it untunes the heart for prayer, meditation, holy conference; it cloisters up the soul. This is not sorrow, but rather sullenness, and doth render a man not so much penitential as cynical. 3. When it is out of season. I see no reason why a Christian should be discontented, unless for his discontent. X. DIVINE MOTIVES TO CONTENTMENT. The first argument to contentation. 1. Consider the excellency of it. Contentment is a flower that doth not grow in every garden; it teacheth a man how in the midst of want to abound. Now there are in species these seven rare excellencies in contentment. (1) A contented Christian carries heaven about him, for what is heaven but that sweet repose and full contentment that the soul shall have in God? In contentment there is the firstfruits of heaven. The sails of a mill move with the wind, but the mill itself stands still, an emblem of contentment; when our outward estate moves with the wind of providence, yet the heart is settled through holy contentment. 2. Whatever is defective in the creature is made up in contentment. Wicked men are often disquieted in the enjoyment of all things; the contented Christian is well in the want of all things. He is poor in purse, but rich in promise. 3. Contentment makes a man in tune to serve God; it oils the wheels of the soul and makes it more agile and nimble; it composeth the heart and makes it fit for prayer, meditation, &c. How can he that is in a passion of grief or discontent "attend upon the Lord without distraction?" Contentment doth prepare and tune the heart. 4. Contentment is the spiritual arch or pillar of the soul; it fits a man to bear burdens; he whose heart is ready to sink under the least sin, by virtue of this hath a spirit invincible under sufferings. The contented Christian is like Samson that carried away the gates of the city upon his back. He can go away with his cross cheerfully, and makes nothing of it. 5. Contentment prevents many sins and temptations. It prevents many sins. In particular there are two sins which contentation prevents. (1) Impatience. (2) It prevents murmuring. Contentment prevents many temptations; discontent is a devil that is always tempting. It puts a man upon indirect means. He that is poor and discontented will attempt anything; he will go to the devil for riches. Satan takes great advantage of our discontent; he loves to fish in these troubled waters. 6. Contentment sweetens every condition. Hath God taken away my comforts from me? It is well, the Comforter still abides. Thus contentment, as a honey-comb, drops sweetness into every condition. Contentation is full of consolation. 7. Contentment hath this excellency. It is the best commentator

upon providence; it makes a fair interpretation of all God's dealings. The argument to contentation is, Consider the evil of discontent. Malcontent hath a mixture of grief and anger in it, and both these must needs raise a storm in the soul. Have you not seen the posture of a sick man? Sometimes he will sit up on his bed, by and by he will lie down, and when he is down he is not quiet; first he turns on the one side and then on the other; he is restless. This is just the emblem of a discontented spirit. Evil 1. The sordidness of it is worthy of a Christian. (1) It is unworthy of his profession. (2) It is unworthy of the relation we stand in to God. Evil 2. Consider the sinfulness of it, which appears in three things—the causes, the concomitants, the consequences of it. (1) It is sinful in the causes, such as pride. The second cause of discontent is envy, which Augustine calls the sin of the devil. The third cause is covetousness. This is a radical sin. The fourth cause of discontent is jealousy, which is sometimes occasioned through melancholy and sometimes misapprehension. The fifth cause of discontent is distrust, which is a great degree of Atheism. (2) Discontent is joined with a sullen melancholy. Cheerfulness credits religion. How can the discontented person be cheerful? (3) It is sinful in its consequences, which are these. (a) It makes a man very unlike the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is a meek Spirit. (b) It makes a man like the devil; the devil, being swelled with the poison of envy and malice, is never content; just so is the malcontent. (c) Discontent disjoins the soul; it untunes the heart for duty. (d) Discontent sometimes nnfits for the very use of reason. Jonah, in a passion of discontent, spake no better than blasphemy and nonsense; "I do well to be angry even unto death." This humour doth even suspend the very acts of reason. (e) Discontent does not only disquiet a man's self, but those who are near him. This evil spirit troubles families, parishes, &c. Evil 3. Consider the simplicity of it. I may say, as the Psalmist, "surely they are disquieted in vain," which appears thus—(1) Is it not a vain, simple thing to be troubled at the loss of that which is in its own nature perishing and changeable? (2) Discontent is a heart-breaking: "by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken." It takes away the comfort of life. (3) Discontent does not ease us of our burden, but it makes the cross heavier. A contented spirit goes cheerfully under its affliction. (4) Discontent spins out our troubles the longer. The argument to contentation is this, Why is not a man content with the competency which he hath? Perhaps if he had more he would be less content. The world is such that the more we have the more we crave; it cannot fill the heart of man. When the fire burns, how do you quench it? Not by putting oil on the flame, or laying on more wood, but by withdrawing the fuel. The argument to contentation is the shortness of life. It is "but a vapour." The argument to contentation is, Consider seriously the nature of a prosperous condition. There are in a prosperous estate three things. 1. More trouble. 2. In a prosperous condition there is more danger. 3. A prosperous condition hath in it a greater reckoning; every man must be responsible for his talents. The argument to contentation is the example of those who have been eminent for contentation. Examples are usually more forcible than precepts. Abraham being called out to hot service, and such as was against flesh and blood, was content. God bid him offer up his son Isaac. The argument to contentation is this, To have a competency and to want contentment is a great judgment. XI. THREE THINGS INSERTED BY WAY OF CAUTION. In the next place I come to lay down some necessary cautions. Though I say a man should be content in every estate, yet there are three estates in which he must not be contented. 1. He must not be contented in a natural estate; here we must learn not to be content. 2. Though, in regard to externals, a man should be in every estate content, yet he must not be content in such a condition wherein God is apparently dishonoured. 3. The third caution is, though in every condition we must be content, yet we are not to content ourselves with a little grace. Grace is the best blessing. Though we should be contented with a competency of estate, yet not with a competency of grace. XII. SHOWING HOW A CHRISTIAN MAY KNOW WHETHER HE HATH LEARNED THIS DIVINE ART. 1. A contented spirit is a silent spirit. He hath not one word to say against God: "I was dumb and silent, because thou didst it." Contentment silenceth all dispute: "He sitteth alone and keepeth silence." 2. A contented spirit is a cheerful spirit. The Greeks call it euthemia. Contentment is something more than patience; for patience denotes only submission, contentment denotes cheerfulness. 3. A contented spirit is a thankful spirit. This is a degree above the other; "in everything giving thanks." 4. He that is content no condi-

tion comes amiss to him; so it is in the text, "in whatever state I am." He could carry a greater sail or lesser. Thus a contented Christian knows how to turn himself to any condition. 5. He that is contented with his condition, to rid himself out of trouble, will not turn himself into sin. XIII. CONTAINING A CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY, OR RULES ABOUT CONTENTMENT. And here I shall lay down some rules for holy contentment. Rule 1. Advance faith. All our disquiets do issue immediately from unbelief. It is this that raiseth the storm of discontent in the heart. O set faith a-work! How doth faith work contentment? (1) Faith shows the soul that whatever its trials are, yet it is from the hand of a father. (2) Faith sucks the honey of contentment out of the hive of promise. Rule 2. Labour for assurance. O let us get the interest cleared between God and our souls! Rule 3. Get an humble spirit. The humble man is the contented man. If his estate be low, his heart is lower than his estate, therefore be content. Rule 4. Keep a clear conscience. Contentment is the manna that is laid up in the ark of a good conscience. Rule 5. Learn to deny yourselves. Look well to your affections; bridle them in. (1) Mortify your desires. (2) Moderate your delights. Set not your heart too much upon any creature. What we over-love, we shall over-grieve. Rule 6. Get much of heaven into your heart. Spiritual things satisfy. The more of heaven is in us, the less earth will content us. Rule 7. Look not so much on the dark side of your condition as on the light. Rule 8. Consider in what a posture we stand here in the world. (1) We are in a military condition; we are soldiers. Now a soldier is content with anything. (3) We are in a mendicant condition; we are beggars. Rule 9. Let not your hope depend upon these outward things. Rule 10. Let us often compare our condition. Make this five-fold comparison. (1) Let us compare our condition and our desert together. (2) Let us compare our condition with others, and this will make us content. (3) Let us compare our condition with Christ's upon earth. (4) Let us compare our condition with what it was once, and this will make us content. (5) Let us compare our condition with what it shall be shortly. Rule 11. Get fancy regulated. It is the fancy which raiseth the price of things above their real worth. Rule 12. Consider how little will suffice nature. The body is but a small continent, and is easily recruited. Rule 13. Believe the present condition is best for us. Flesh and blood is not a competent judge. Rule 14. Meditate much on the glory which shall be revealed. XIV. OF CONSOLATION TO THE CONTENTED CHRISTIAN. To a contented Christian I shall say for a farewell—God is exceedingly taken with such a frame of heart. (*T. Watson.*) *The blessedness of contentment:*—The habit of looking on the best side of every event is better than £1,000 a year. (*S. Johnson, LL.D.*) *Sources of contentment:*—Four of us were one day climbing together a beautiful hill in Switzerland, and when we reached a bend in the road, we stopped to rest, and to enjoy the widespread prospect. "How charming is this clear fresh air, how lovely that green valley, and how graceful is that silver river winding all along!" But suddenly regarding my companions I noticed that not one of the three enjoyed the view at all. "The fact is," said the first, "I have had no pleasure in my walk; I have a thorn in my foot." And so is our passage through life hindered in enjoyment by one troubling sin, a conscience ill at ease, that makes each step a lame one. The next traveller was gazing, it is true, at the prospect, but not with pure enjoyment, for he said: "How I wish that house down there were mine!" He, too, lost the true delight of looking at fine scenery, being wholly absorbed in the wish for something that never could be his. As for my third companion, he seemed less happy even than the others, saying, as he looked into the sky with a face of anxious foreboding: "I'm afraid it's going to rain." Let us not mar the prospects of happiness by a halting walk, a greedy wish, or by undue fear of that evil which we cannot prevent. (*Sunday at Home.*) *Contentment is rare:*—Suppose I could have these faces gathered and brought to me, and could hold them thus, and should ask, "Whose image and superscription is stamped on this face?" "Care marked this face," would be the (frequent) answer. "Who marked this one?" "Fretfulness." "And this?" "Selfishness?" "This?" "Suffering stamped this." "What this?" "Lust! Lust!" "And this?" "Self-will." "And who stamped this face?" I should ask of one—a rare and sweet one. "This! why, where did you get it? Whose face is this? How beautiful! It is marked by the sweet peace of a contented spirit." I never saw more than a dozen of these in my life. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Contentment:*—A minister of the gospel, passing one day near a cottage, was attracted to its door by

the sound of a loud and earnest voice. It was a bare and lonely dwelling; the home of a man who was childless, old, and poor. Drawing near this mean and humble cabin, the stranger at length made out these words, "This, and Jesus Christ too! this, and Jesus Christ too!" as they were repeated over and over in tones of deep emotion; of wonder, gratitude, and praise. His curiosity was roused to see what that could be which called forth such fervent, overflowing thanks. Stealing near, he looked in at the patched and broken window; and there in the form of a grey, bent, worn-out son of toil, at a rude table, with hands raised to God, and his eyes fixed on some crusts of bread and a cup of water, sat piety, peace, humility, contentment, exclaiming, "This, and Jesus Christ too!" (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Contentment: a parable*:—A violet shed its modest beauties at the turfy foot of an old oak. It lived there many days during the kind summer in obscurity. The winds and the rains came and fell, but they did not hurt the violet. Storms often crashed among the boughs of the oak. And one day said the oak, "Are you not ashamed of yourself when you look up at me, you little thing down there, when you see how large I am, and how small you are; when you see how small a space you fill, and how widely my branches are spread?" "No," said the violet, "we are both where God has placed us; and God has given us both something. He has given to you strength, to me sweetness; and I offer Him back my fragrance, and I am thankful." "Sweetness is all nonsense," said the oak; "a few days—a month at most—where and what will you be? You will die, and the place of your grave will not lift the ground higher by a blade of grass. I hope to stand some time—ages, perhaps—and then, when I am cut down, I shall be a ship to bear men over the sea, or a coffin to hold the dust of a prince. What is your lot to mine?" "But," cheerfully breathed the violet back, "we are both what God made us, and we are both where He placed us. I suppose I shall die soon. I hope to die fragrantly, as I have lived fragrantly. You must be cut down at last; it does not matter, that I see, a few days or a few ages, my littleness or your largeness, it comes to the same thing at last. We are what God made us. We are where God placed us. God gave you strength; God gave me sweetness." (*Paxton Hood.*) *Equanimity reasonable to faith*:—When Archbishop Leighton lost his patrimony by failure of a merchant, he only said: "The little that was in Mr. E—'s hands hath failed me, but I shall either have no need of it, or be supplied in some other way." On his brother-in-law expressing surprise that he took the matter so easily, he answered: "If when the Duke of Newcastle, after losing nineteen times as much of yearly income, can dance and sing, the solid hopes of Christianity will not support us, we had better be in another world." (*Sunday at Home.*) *Making the best of circumstances*:—Sydney Smith, when labouring at Foston-le-Clay, in Yorkshire, though he did not feel himself to be in his proper element, went cheerfully to work in the determination to do his best. "I am resolved," he said, "to like it and reconcile myself to it, which is more manly than to feign myself above it, and to send up complaints by the post of being thrown away, of living desolate, and such like trash." So Dr. Hook, when leaving Leeds for Chichester, said, "Wherever I may be, I shall, by God's blessing, do with all my might what my hand findeth to do, and if I do not find work, I shall make it" (*S. Smiles.*)

Ver. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound.—The Christian—I. EXPECTS VICISSITUDE. II. KNOWS HOW TO ADAPT HIMSELF TO ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. III. IS INSTRUCTED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *How to be abased*:—During the periods between the paroxysms of the fever, Cromwell occupied the time with listening to passages from the sacred volume, or by a resigned or despairing reference to the death of his daughter. "Read to me," he said to his wife, in one of these intervals, "the Epistle to the Philippians." She read these words: "I know both how to be abased, and"—the reader paused. "That verse," said the Protector, "once saved my life when the death of my eldest born, the infant Oliver, pierced my heart like the sharp blade of a poignard." (*Lamartine.*) *The knowledge of properly using abundance*:—Paul had the double knowledge, "How to be abased" and "how to abound." The two are not distinctly separable—each in some way conditions the other. There is far too little of the knowledge how to abound. Few men who abound come asking how to abound. Men think it hard enough to get rich, but a very easy thing to be rich. No man has a right to be anything unless he has the knowledge of how to be that thing. When Paul says, "I know how to abound," he is thinking of anything which makes life pleasant and ample—of money,

of scholarship, of friendship, of great spiritual hopes and experiences. Paul did not have all these, and yet he had the knowledge of how to use them. The power by which he could rob abundance of its dangers was the knowledge of the true perfection of a soul in serving Christ. All men do not know how to be rich. The generous, sympathetic, active, kind, rich man knows how to be rich. What is more pitiable than the blunderer who holds wealth and knows not how to use it? There is also needed a knowledge of how to know truth. Here is a scholar who can give you any information, and yet you feel no enrichment. He has no deep convictions, no faith. He has grown less human. He values his knowledge as a botanist his specimens, and not as a gardener his plants. The highest knowledge comes by reverence and devotedness to God. (*Phillips Brooks, D.D.*)

The difficulty of managing prosperity:—Manton says: "A garment which is too long trails in the mire and soon becomes a dirty rag; and it is easy for large estates to become much the same. It is a hard lesson to 'learn to abound' (Phil. iv. 12). We say such a one would do well to be a lord or a lady; but it is a harder thing than we think it to be." It is hard to carry a full cup with a steady hand. High places are dizzy places, and full many have fallen to their eternal ruin through climbing aloft without having grace to look up. The simile of the trailing garment used by Manton is simple, but instructive. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) I am instructed.

Initiation into the mysteries:—Formerly rendered: "I have been instructed," it is given in the Revised Version, "I have been taught the secret;" while Lightfoot still more adequately brings out the meaning: "I have been initiated, I possess the secret." That is what the Greek word means. And here we have one of many examples where a word of strong heathen association is baptized afresh, and consecrated to signify a new and loftier range of thoughts. What these words meant for a serious and good man, from the heathen point of view, was that he had been admitted to communicate in the mysteries, as the great sacramental services of Paganism were called. He had taken part in solemn baptisms, expressing the need of the purification of the soul. He had listened to an awful proclamation from an officiating minister, warning off all murderers and all barbarians, and, in later times, perhaps, all atheists, and Epicureans, and Christians. For these secret sacred rites were intended only for men of Greek blood; and it was thought neither pleasing to the gods nor good for the State that strangers should intrude upon these solemnities. And then, in these ceremonies themselves, he had been made to pass through experiences which could never be forgotten as long as he lived. His imagination was appealed to both through eye and through ear. He saw the representation of wanderings through the darkness, as amidst some maze; shapes of horror were revealed, and his soul was filled with trembling and terror. He was made to pass through a kind of mental proof or purgatory. Then all was changed. There was a sudden illumination; the scenery of beautiful pastures was disclosed; there was music, and dancing, and joy; and he walked in sweet converse with the pious and the good. At the crowning point of the service he was rapt away in an ecstasy of "beholding," a species of beatific vision. He seemed to see the meaning of life, its beginning and its end; he beheld the wicked wallowing in filth and the righteous in Paradise—a blessed climate, where all the conditions of spiritual and physical good were realized. On the whole, these sacramental services exerted a very wholesome effect upon the consciences of the people. They learned to meditate on death and eternity, on the need of the soul being prepared for its future, on the punishment of the wicked and the blessedness of the just. One of the Athenian orators, in boasting to his fellow citizens of the glories of their native land, refers to the great mysteries as imparting "good hopes for eternity." If we ask the question how it was that these institutions died away in course of time, the simple answer seems to be that, in part, they were overcome by the superior spirituality and energy of our own religion; partly that they had themselves waxed corrupt, and had become sources of corruption, though originally good. However, the rites of which we have been speaking went on for a long time, for several centuries after Paul. When this letter was read in the Church of Philippi many, possibly all, of the Gentile members were initiated persons. And when this solemn word: "I have been initiated," fell upon their ear, it must have vibrated in all its power through their imagination. They must have felt that their beloved teacher was giving a quite new turn to the word. The old sacramental and pictorial associations had vanished; and in place of them there was a deep, central, spiritual truth spoken of as the secret of Paul. What was this secret? It is expressed again by a single word, "content."

(Prof. E. Johnson.) *The secret of contentment*:—It was the beautiful expression of a Christian, who had been rich, when he was asked how he could bear his reduced state so happily, "When I was rich, I had God in everything, and now I am poor I have everything in God." *The value of contentment*:—Contentment is the best food to preserve a sound man, and the best medicine to restore a sick man. It resembles the gilt on nauseous pills, which makes a man take them without tasting their bitterness. Contentment will make a cottage look as fair as a palace. He is not a poor man that hath but little, but he is a poor man that wants much. (William Secker.) *The secret explained*:—Making a day's excursion from Botzen, in the Tyrol, we went along the very narrowest of roads, mere alleys, to which our country lanes would be turnpike roads. Well, you may be sure that we did not engage an ordinary broad carriage, for that would have found the passage as difficult as the needle's eye to the camel; but our landlord had a very narrow chaise for us—just the very thing for threading those four-foot passages. Now, I must make you hear the moral of it, you fretful little gentlemen. When you have a small estate, you must have small wants, and by contentment suit your carriage to your road. "Not so easy," say you? "Very necessary to a Christian," say I. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Ver. 13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—Here we find—I. WEAKNESS AND STRENGTH. The believer is weak in himself. Looking to the "all things" to be done he laments this with shame and tears. But he is not alone. Allied to Christ he is strong to overcome evil and to do good. He has courage and hope. Nothing in the way of duty is impossible (2 Cor. xii. 8-10). II. DEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM. Dependence is the law of our being. Of the natural life it is said, "In God we live and move and have our being;" how much more is this true of the spiritual life, and yet we are free. Of our own choice we trust in Christ; of our own will, every moment we abide in Him. "I can" implies the personal life, reason, conscience, will, and endeavour. III. HUMILITY AND ASPIRATION. Paul was remarkable for humility; it grew with him. But he was not discouraged. Fired with the noblest ambition, his inspiration was from above. So with all Christians. In spite of conscious weakness, opposition, and failure, "through Christ" they take heart to persevere. "My soul cleaveth to the dust; quicken thou me according to Thy Word." IV. SUFFERING AND CONTENTMENT. Paul's life was marked by vicissitudes and trouble; he was now in prison. But what then? His soul was free; there was peace within, Christ was with him. As a scholar under the great Master he had learned many things, and among others the Divine secret of content (ver. 11). So with Christians. Their satisfaction is not from without but from within; not from the lower and perishable things of the world, but from the immortal affection of their Saviour and God. LEARN—1. The greatness of Christ as suggested by the place given Him by such a man as Paul. Consider his zeal, labours, achievements, and yet he ascribes the praise of all to Christ. But Paul was only one of many. 2. The grandeur of the Christian life. There is no limit to its possibilities. What has been done is only an earnest of what will be done. Take courage. "Through Christ," His blood, Word, Spirit, resurrection, &c., all things are possible. What inspiration here for prayer and holy endeavour (Eph. iii. 20-21). 3. The certain triumph of Christianity. Strengthened by Him, His people shall never cease to pray and strive, till all the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. (W. Forsyth.) *All-sufficiency magnified*:—The former part of the sentence would be a piece of impudent daring without the latter. There have been men who, puffed up with vanity, have said, "I can do all things." Their destruction has been sure—Nebuchadnezzar, Xerxes, Napoleon. And what shall we say to our apostle, weak in presence and contemptible in speech, the leader of a hated and persecuted sect. Has Gamaliel taught him an eloquence that can baffle all opposers? Have his sufferings given him so stern a courage that he is not to be turned away? Is it on himself he relies? No; he turns his face towards his Saviour and with devout reverence but dauntless courage. "Through Christ," &c. I. THE MEASURE of the text. It is exceeding broad. Paul meant that he was able—1. To endure all trials. 2. To perform all duties. 3. To conquer all corruptions. He once said, "O wretched man that I am," &c. But he did not stay there; "Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory." Have you a violent temper? Through Christ you can curb it. Are you timid? Christ can give you a lion's boldness. Are you slothful? Christ can make you energetic.

Are you incapable for strong effort? Christ can increase your capacity. Are you inconstant? Christ can settle you. There is not a Hittite or Jebusite in the whole land that cannot be cast out. 4. To serve God in any state (ver. 12). Some Christians are called to undergo extreme changes from wealth to poverty, and from poverty to wealth, and, alas, there is often a corresponding spiritual change; the one desponds, the other is elated or becomes avaricious. This need not be. When you gave yourself to Christ you gave yourself wholly to serve Him in everything and anywhere. 5. You can do all things through Christ in respect to all worlds. In this world you can enlighten and uplift it. You may pass through the dark gate of death with Christ without fear into the world of spirits, and there you are more than conqueror. II. THE MANNER OF IT. None of us can explain this; but we may see how the acts of the Spirit for Christ tend to strengthen the soul for all things. 1. By strengthening our faith. It is remarkable how timid and doubting Christians have in time of trial behaved most bravely. God gives faith equal to the emergency. Weak faith can sprout and grow till it becomes great under the pressure of a great trial. Nothing braces a man's nerves like the cold winter's blast. Together with faith often comes a singular firmness of mind. When John Ardley was brought before Bonner the latter said, "The fire will convert you; faggots are sharp preachers." Said Ardley, "I am not afraid to try it; and I tell thee, Bishop, if I had as many lives as I have hairs on my head, I would give them all up sooner than I would give up Christ." And then Christians are often enabled to anticipate the joys of heaven when their pangs are greatest. Look at old Ignatius with his arm in the lion's mouth, exclaiming, "Now I begin to be a Christian." 2. By quickening the mental faculties. It is astonishing how poor illiterate persons have been able to refute their clever opponents. Cranmer and Ridley were no match for Jane Bouchier the Baptist martyr. "I am as true a servant of God as any of you; and if you put your poor sister to death, take care lest God should let loose the wolf of Rome on you, and you have to suffer for God, too." 3. By enabling the believer to overcome himself. He can lose all things, because he is already prepared to do it; he can suffer all things, because he does not value his body as the worldling does; he can brave all things, because he has learned to fear God, and therefore has no reason to fear man; he can perform wonders, because his body and spirit are disciplined. 4. Note the present tense. Not Christ has strengthened, did strengthen at conversion, "As thy days so shall thy strength be." III. THE MESSAGE OF IT. 1. One of encouragement to those who are doing something for Christ, but feel painfully their own inability. Cease not from God's work, because you are unable to perform it of yourself. Cease from yourself, from man. Before Zerubbabel the mountain shall become a plain. If we believed great things we should do great things. Do not go through the world saying, "I was born little." You were not meant to be little. Act as David did in spite of his brothers' sneers. 2. Take heed that you do it in Christ's strength. You can do nothing without that. Go not forth till thou hast first prayed. The battle that begins with holy reliance on God means victory. 3. Paul speaks in the name of all Christians. How is it that some of you then are doing nothing? What a work there is to do! And what may not one resolute Christian accomplish. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The power of the Christian:—*I. THERE ARE TWO MAIN ERRORS BY WHICH MEN ARE DECEIVED. The first is the fancy that they can do all things that they wish and try to do of themselves. The second is that they cannot and need not do anything. These have been the sources of two of the most mischievous heresies, the one undermining all spiritual, the other all practical religion; the first is Pelagianism, the other Antinomianism. II. THE END OF THESE ERRORS IS TO KEEP MEN IN SIN. Pride says it will pay off the debt it owes to God when it has grown bigger. "Why should I do that to-day," it cries, "which I can do any day whenever I please?" Meanwhile sloth alleges that it is a bankrupt and demands as such to be let off all manner of payment, forgetting that a negligent and fraudulent bankrupt has no claim to favour. Pride says it can obey God and does not. Sloth says it cannot and need not. III. THESE ERRORS, IRRECONCILABLE THOUGH THEY MAY SEEM, ARE OFTEN FOUND SIDE BY SIDE. They are Satan's right and left hand in which he tosses our souls from one to the other. The proud man, although he makes himself believe that he can obey God by himself, must be often warned by his conscience that he has not done so. At such times he will try to stifle his qualms by saying that he has done his best, and that Christ's merits will be sufficient to make up. The slothful man, too, who has drugged his conscience with the notion that as his best works cannot earn heaven, so it matters not what his works are, must be startled now and then by scriptural

exhortations to holiness; but when so startled he whispers to himself that let the worst come to the worst he will reform by and by. IV. BOTH THESE ERRORS ARE ANSWERED BY THE TEXT, which picks out the truth involved in each and separates it from the false. When an error is long-lived it is by means of some truth mixed up with it. 1. As the pride of man says, "I can do all things," so does Paul; only pride stops short here, whereas Paul adds, "through Christ," &c. Pride forgets the Fall, and also that what it calls its own strength is really God's gift. 2. The sluggard is also bereft of his only excuse. God never demands of us what we cannot do; and Paul tells us that there is no limit to our power; he poor, weak, frail as he was, could do all things when strengthened by Christ. V. WHAT DOES PAUL MEAN BY THIS. 1. Certainly not in the same sense that God can do all things—make a world, arrest the sun, &c.; but—2. In accordance with the previous verse. These things, however, seem to some hardly sufficient to bear the lofty declaration of the text, and would rather have expected to hear of some great victory gained or miracle wrought. Yet it is in these things that our hardest trials lie, for they are the things that the natural man cannot do of himself. He may brave dangers and accomplish many wonderful works, but he does not know how to be abased and how to abound. A cup knows how to be full and how to be empty, and stands equally straight in either case. But man's hand cannot lift the full cup and will not lift the empty one. It is only through Christ that whether the Lord giveth or taketh away we can say, "Blessed be His name." 3. The true children of God can do all things that they can ever desire to do, viz., the will of God. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) *Strength by Christ*:—The more literal rendering is "I am strong for all things"; or, "I am equal to all things, Christ invigorating me," either doing or suffering. Let us look at—I. CHRIST STRENGTHENING PAUL. 1. Every man needs strength. Weakness is so much less of life. Lack of strength is more serious than any lack of outward possession. A weak rich man is in a worse position than a strong poor man. Weakness lessens work, reduces enjoyment, and aggravates suffering. It is also the cause of wickedness, exposing the individual to fierce temptation. As a preservative against sin we need to ask for daily strength. 2. Every man requires strengthening. Even the strong by constitution and education. The child learning to walk alone is strengthened by the hand of the mother, and the aged mother is in return strengthened by the arm of her son. The boy is strengthened to learn by his tutor or employer, and the man to pursue the objects of life by various invigorating influences; while all are strengthened by God. 3. The Christian is no exception. His conversion is not translation to ease. There are times when he lies down in green pastures; but he lies down tired, and that he may rise stronger. We rest not for resting's sake but for work's sake. The Christian life is a race to be run and a battle to be fought. To cease either is to cease to be a Christian. 4. A Christian's strength can come only by his being strengthened. There is not within the man as a man or a Christian any stock of strength given at the commencement. Our resources are supplied as we need them. This arrangement keeps us close to the source of all energy and wisdom, communion with whom alone, apart from imparted blessings, invigorates. 5. An apostle is no exception to this rule. On the battle-field the eye of the soldier is upon the officers of the opposing army. So ministers are more tried than others, partly because of their vocation, and partly that they may have wisdom and grace to succour the tempted. 6. And Christ did strengthen Paul. By His example, grace, promises, doctrines, precepts. II. PAUL HEREBY ASSURED THAT ALL THINGS WERE POSSIBLE TO HIM. He felt equal to labour, suffering, and dying. Yet this was not undue self-confidence, but humility. 1. If we Christians are not equal to all the demands which God makes upon us our inability involves guilt. Weakness is not a misfortune but a crime, needing not pity but blame. Christ does not require anything impossible or injuriously difficult, nothing for which He does not guarantee strength. 2. The Divine help is manifold and constant. Look at the assistance obtained from—(1) The Scriptures, which thoroughly furnish us unto all good works. (2) Providence, under which all things work together for our good. (3) Christian principle—faith, love, hope, joy, obedience. 3. If we turn from this various help to Christ personally and then remember that He is with us, immutable in His love, unfailing in His resources, unwearied in His oversight, we can understand what Paul meant. (1) I cannot do many things which my fellow Christians say is my duty; (2) Nor what in my ignorance I conclude to be my duty; (3) Nor what is actually my duty, if I go about it in a wrong spirit or way; (4) But Christ will strengthen us for all His will. What can hinder? Not our ignorance, for He is our teacher; not our feebleness, for He never breaks the

bruised reed; not our sinfulness, for He is our Saviour. 4. This assurance covers all the necessities of our Christian life—perseverance, cross-bearing and self-crucifixion, Christian work, the prospect and experience of death. (*S. Martin.*) *The fountain of strength* :—We all need strength. Whether conscious or unconscious of it, we are all weak. Our very strength is weakness. We may trust it and be deceived by it. This is a defect we cannot supply. The exertion of weakness cannot produce strength. We must look out of ourselves; and to save us from a vain search God sets Christ before us as our strength and strengthener. I. How CHRIST STRENGTHENS US. 1. Not by miracle or magic; not by acting upon us without our knowledge or against our will, but through our own intelligent and active powers. 2. By instructing us in the knowledge of our weakness and His own strength. 3. By His example, showing us how to do all that He requires in His own life. 4. By supplying us with the great motive power—His constraining love. 5. By working faith in us, which brings us into vital union with Him who is the source of strength. II. FOR WHAT HE STRENGTHENS US. 1. To fulfil the law as a rule of duty. 2. To resist temptation. 3. To suffer and endure. (*J. A. Alexander, D.D.*) *Dependence on Christ* :—(Text in conjunction with John xv. 5.) Two speakers, Divine-human and human. From how different a platform do they speak; one from conscious power to help, the other from conscious need of help. One a great Giver, the other a great receiver. A fine harmony in the two statements. Though Paul's is not quite so universal as Christ's, it forms a pleasing testimony to the correctness of Christ's statement, and the usefulness of the promised aid. I. THE DIVINE ASSERTION. God in Christ speaks. 1. It applies to man's spiritual life. 2. To His every-day purpose and action. "Good" is understood. There are some things we can do without Christ—and yet considering Him as God we cannot even do evil without the strength He supplies. Similarly, in a high spiritual sense, we can do nothing good without Him. We may feel our dignity affronted, and our first impulse will be denial of, or objection to the universality of the statement. But our life will prove that Christ is right. In every part of our life we have Christ's influence. The Christian becomes "a law unto himself," but behind the Christian and the law is the great Inspirer—Christ. Christ is the only one who can make this sweeping assertion without fear of ultimate contradiction. II. THE HUMAN CONFIRMATION. Paul gives particular instances, then generalizes. How does Christ strengthen us? 1. By His having done all things Himself. In all life's experiences, conflicts, emergencies, Christ has preceded us. We have to walk in His steps. 2. By the effects of His wondrous life. We linger around the four great landmarks, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Gethsemane, Calvary, and they are a ceaseless inspiration to us. His miracles have made many a life-path brighter, and they yield constant consolation. He healed the sick; sickness can be better borne. He hushed the waves; He stills the storm to-day. 3. By the effect of His unique teaching. Every word of His is the bread of life. 4. By His Cross and death. He is the Saviour from the curse of life—sin. Thus we hear Paul, "I can do all things," not by his immediate environment, men, or things; not by his inherent energy; but by Christ which "strengtheneth him with strength in his soul" (*Psa. cxxxviii. 3*). Our strength is not superseded. It is linked with God's and made the grander for the union. It is "all things," even the otherwise impossible. It applies to the whole life. "Without me—nothing." Our power "through Christ which strengthens us" is limitless. So should our gratitude be. (*J. E. Swallow.*) *Strength through Christ* :—When I was at Princeton, Professor Henry had so constructed a huge bar of iron, bent into the form of a horseshoe, that it used to hang suspended from another iron bar above it. Not only did it hang there but it upheld four thousand pounds weight attached to it! The horseshoe magnet was not welded or glued to the metal above it, but through the iron wire coiled round it there ran a subtle current of electricity from a galvanic battery. Stop the flow of the current for one instant and the huge horseshoe dropped. So does all the lifting power of the Christian come from the currents of spiritual influence which flow into his heart from the living Jesus. The strength of the Almighty One enters into the believer. If his connection with Christ is cut off, in an instant he becomes as any other man. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *The secret of fortitude* :—In the days of bloody Mary a poor Protestant was condemned to be burned alive. When he came in sight of the stake he exclaimed, "Oh! I cannot burn! I cannot burn!" Those who heard him supposed he intended to recant, but they misunderstood him. He felt he needed more strength to bear the dread ordeal in a worthy manner, so being left a few moments to himself, he cried in an agony of prayer that God would more

sensibly reveal Himself to him. As the result of this, instead of recanting, he cried out triumphantly, "Now I can burn! Now I can burn!" (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *Strength in Christ*:—"I was requested," said the late Dr. Macleod, "by a brother minister, who was unwell, to go and visit a dying boy. He told me before some remarkable things of this boy. He was eleven years of age, and during three years' sickness had manifested the most patient submission to the will of God, with a singular enlightenment of the Spirit. I went to visit him. He had suffered the most excruciating pain. For years he had not known one day's rest. I gazed with wonder at the boy. After drawing near to him, and speaking some words of sympathy, he looked at me with his blue eyes—he could not move, it was the night before he died—and breathed into my ear these few words: 'I am strong in Him.' The words were few, and uttered feebly; they were the words of a feeble child, in a poor home, where the only ornament was that of a meek, and quiet, and affectionate mother; but these words seemed to lift the burden from the very heart; they seemed to make the world more beautiful than ever it was before; they brought home to my heart a great and a blessed truth. May all of us be strong in Him." *Courageous Christians needed*:—"No man is likely to accomplish much who moodily indulges a desponding view of his own capacities. By God's help the weakest of us may be strong, and it is the way to become so, to resolve never to give up a good work till we have tried our best to achieve it. To think nothing impossible is the privilege of faith. We deprecate the indolent cowardice of the man who always felt assured that every new enterprise would be too much for him, and therefore declined it; but we admire the pluck of the ploughman who was asked on his cross-examination if he could read Greek, and replied he did not know, because he had never tried. Those Suffolk horses which will pull at a post till they drop are worth a thousand times as much as jibbing animals that run back as soon as ever the collar begins to press them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The hidden source of power*:—"A minister says: "The other day I was up in Lancashire, and my host took me to see one of those monster factories which are the wonders of civilization, covering acres of ground—nobody knows how many stories high, and how many hundreds of windows they have to let in the light upon the industrious work-people inside. As I walked in and through those rooms, and went from one story to another, and saw the rolling of the pinions and heard the rattling of the wheels, and felt the vibration of the floor beneath my feet, while the raw material was being, as by magic, brought out at the other end to be a robe for a peasant or a prince, I said, 'Why, where in the world is the motive-power that sets all this to work?' He took me out of the building altogether, to a little circumscribed place beneath, where there was only one door and a window to the whole room; but through the open door I saw the great piston moving in silent and majestic power as it was doing this wondrous work. 'There,' said he, 'is the mighty force that sets the work in motion.'" *Power through the Spirit of Christ*:—"A young Italian boy knocked one day at the door of an artist's studio in Rome, and when it was opened, exclaimed, "Please, madam, will you give me the master's brush?" The painter was dead, and the boy, feeling inflamed with longing to be an artist, wished for the great master's brush, with the idea that it would inspire him with his genius. The lady placed the brush belonging to her departed husband in the hand of the boy, saying, "This is his brush; try it, my boy." With a flush of earnestness on his face, he tried, but found he could paint no better with the master's brush than with his own. The lady then said to him, "You cannot paint like the great master unless you have his spirit." (*W. Birch.*) *Power through the love of Christ*:—"One day, one of the gigantic eagles of Scotland carried away an infant, which was sleeping by the fireside in its mother's cottage. The whole village ran after it; but the eagle soon perched itself upon the loftiest eyrie, and every one despaired of the child being recovered. A sailor tried to climb the ascent, but his strong limbs trembled, and he was at last obliged to give up the attempt. A robust Highlander, accustomed to climb the hills, tried next, and even his limbs gave way, and he was in fact precipitated to the bottom. But, at last, a poor peasant woman came forward. She put her feet on one shelf of the rock, then on a second, and then on a third; and in this manner, amid the trembling hearts of all who were looking on, she rose to the very top of the cliff, and at last whilst the breasts of those below were heaving, came down step by step, until, amid the shouts of the villagers, she stood at the bottom of the rock with the child on her bosom. Why did that woman succeed, when the strong sailor and the practised Highlander had failed? Why, because between her and the babe there was a tie; that woman was the mother of the babe.

Let there be love to Christ and to souls in your hearts, and greater wonders will be accomplished. (*Manual of Anecdotes.*)

Vers. 15-19. Now, ye Philippians, know also that in the beginning of the gospel.—Observe—I. THE STRAITENED CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE APOSTLE. II. THE HONOURABLE CONDUCT OF THE PHILIPPIANS. 1. Though poor (2 Cor. viii. 2) they acknowledged their debt. 2. Stood alone. 3. Repeated their bounty of their own free will. III. THE COMMENDATION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. 1. Recorded for their honour. 2. For our instruction. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Liberality to the minister is*—I. HONOURABLE. II. PROFITABLE. III. ACCEPTABLE TO GOD. IV. A PLEDGE OF ABUNDANT BLESSING. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 17. Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.—*The nature and duty of giving:*—I. The Christian's OBJECT. 1. Not self, but Christ. 2. Not the world, but heaven. 3. (And the minister of the gospel especially may add), not yours, but you. II. The Christian's PRACTICE. 1. To do something for God's cause. 2. To devote all he possibly can for this purpose. 3. To do this as a privilege. III. The Christian's REWARD. 1. It is personal and reciprocal—there is individual satisfaction and return of benefits given. 2. It is fruit—continually increasing in extent and value. 3. It is eternal—a reward with Christ, and His holy angels and spirits of just men made perfect. (*I. W. Tapper.*) I. THE NATURE OF Christian giving. It should be—1. Systematic. 2. Proportionate. 3. Regarded as a plain and prescribed duty. 4. An honoured privilege. II. ITS FRUIT OR REWARD. 1. The Divine approval and promise. 2. Soul satisfaction. 3. Eternal results in the world to come. (*G. Webber.*) *It is more blessed to give than receive:*—I. THE RECIPIENT is placed under obligation—if unselfish and content he has no desire for a gift—values it chiefly for the giver's sake. II. THE GIVER—gratifies a noble feeling—sows precious seed—has in prospect an abundant harvest. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Fruit:*—The word is of large significance. What a place it occupies in nature! Where is the work of husbandry, or the process of animal or vegetable life, in which this is not the one point of importance? What fruit is there? (James v. 7). What if it comes not? What if after all the husbandman's waiting and toil, every blossom is out off by frost, and every ear of corn spoiled by blight or mildew? Will he be consoled by the reflection that the trees in the earlier spring were bright with every form of promise, or that the fields were once green with the springing blade, wet with abundant rain, or warm with glorious sunshine? The one thing for which he looked was fruit. All else was valuable only as a prognostication of fruit. If the hope was not realized, it was rather a mockery than a satisfaction. And this word fruit was transferred by the gospel to other and yet more important uses. Trace it through the Scriptures of the New Testament, through the discourses of our Lord and the writings of the apostles, and how grave and anxious are the questions it suggests for self-examination (Luke iii. 8, 9; Matt. vii. 20, xxi. 19, 43; Luke xiii. 7; John xv. 2; Rom. vi. 22; James iii. 17; Phil. i. 11). You see what God looks for; what is the one important question as concerns each of us; What fruit is there? In the great parable (Matt. xiii. 8-23) in which our Lord classified the hearers of His gospel in all ages, the one distinction between true and false profession is made to be this: not so much did a man listen, receive, or love the sound or entertain the demands of the gospel; but rather, Was there any fruit? The three evil hearers were alike in this—by this they were equally distinguishable from the good hearer—they brought no fruit to perfection; while he, in various degrees, but in reality, deed, and truth, was seen to produce fruit. Well, therefore, may a minister who understands the business of his high calling try himself and his ministry by this one criterion. Is there any fruit? Well may he as he stands before his people in the exercise of his important and responsible ministry address himself to them with all the earnestness of one pleading for his life, and say, I desire fruit that may abound to your account. He will not, indeed, mislead them as to the nature of the fruit for which he looks. He will never speak of it as though a few isolated acts of self-denial or charity were infallible marks of good. He will constantly remind them that only a heart right with God, a heart truly penitent and believing, can originate such acts as God will approve. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Giving honours the giver:*—It is told of John Wesley that when he bestowed a gift or rendered any one a service he lifted his hat as though he were receiving instead of conferring an obligation. (*Christian Family.*)

Ver. 18. I have all and abound.—*Ministry to the saints an acceptable sacrifice* :—

I. THE INDIVIDUAL RECEIVING THE BENEFIT. 1. A Christian. The first duty of Christians is towards each other. Charity does not stay at home, but it begins there. The largest hearted charity towards the ends of the earth will not excuse parsimoniousness towards our fellow believers close at hand. 3. An aged Christian. Paul has borne the burden and heat of the day. Every Christian has a claim upon his brother Christian, but those who have the greatest claim are those who are worn out in the service of their Master. 3. A poor Christian. Although an apostle and richly endowed, Paul never employed his endowments on his own behalf. After having surrendered the brightest prospects he was now dependent on the charities of God's people. "Blessed is the man who considereth the poor." 4. A Christian minister, who having expended his spiritual gifts on his people, had a right to their temporal support. **II. THE BENEFIT BESTOWED.** "A sacrifice," 1. In the truest sense there is now no real sacrifice. 'By one offering Christ hath perfected for ever them who are sanctified. 2. But in an inferior sense sacrifices are still offered. There is "the sacrifice of praise" and the sacrifice of charity. "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." 3. The essence of sacrifice is self-denial. It is that which costs the offerer something. **III. THE VALUE OF THE BENEFIT.** 1. In relation to God. It is acceptable and well-pleasing to Him—(1) From the motive from which it springs. (2) From the good it does. 2. In relation to the object of the benefit. (1) It produces satisfaction and gratitude. (2) It becomes a means of usefulness. "Fruit to your account." (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*) *Present blessings* :—Such is Paul's confession concerning his temporal condition even in the midst of trials. He did not look on this life with bitterness, or refuse to enjoy it. He was not soured by his trials, but felt that if he had troubles he had blessings also. Gloom is no Christian temper. We must live in sunshine, even when we sorrow. We ought to bless God that we have—**I. THE GIFT OF LIFE.** 1. And not merely that we live, but for those blessings which are included in the notion of our living. God has made life to imply the existence of certain things which are in themselves a happiness. We cannot live without the means of life, and the means of life are means of pleasure. It might have been ordered that life should be sustained by means neither pleasurable nor painful, or even by means that were painful, and that what are the extraordinary means of preserving life should be the ordinary. Suppose, then, that food were medicine, and that wounds and bruises imparted health and strength! On the contrary, life is sustained by blessings. 2. The gospel guarantees these things. God has not promised what the world understands by good things; things whose good is only in the imagination, large estates, sumptuous furniture, carnal, sensual enjoyments, &c. But He has promised that life shall not be a burden but a blessing. 3. And giving us as much as this He bids us be satisfied with it, to confess that we "have all" when we have so much; that we "abound" when we have enough. He promises food, raiment, lodging, and He bids us, having that, to be content. **II. THE GIFT OF SLEEP.** God does not suffer us to be miserable for a long time together, even when He afflicts us, but He breaks our trials into portions; takes us out of this world ever and anon, and gives us holiday time, like children at school. Sleep is equally the comfort and recruiting of rich and poor. We sleep whether we are in sorrow or in joy, in anxiety or hope. **III. THE BLESSINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD.** As food, raiment, sleep, are necessary conditions of life, so is society. When God removes us from the world He puts us into the Church; and distance, as proved in the case of St. Paul, does not break the communion of saints. **IV. THE BLESSINGS OF PRESENT PRAISE IN THE CHURCH, freedom from persecution.** **V. THE PRIVILEGES OF FREE SPEECH AND ACTION.** **VI. THE PRIVILEGES OF DAILY WORSHIP AND WEEKLY COMMUNION.** Let us then enjoy our present blessings and bless the Giver. (*Cardinal Newman.*) *Gratitude* :—**I. IS ASSOCIATED WITH CONTENTMENT**—it has enough—desires no more. **II. ACKNOWLEDGES ITS OBLIGATION**—fully—thankfully. **III. APPRECIATES THE SPIRIT OF THE GIFT**—love—sacrifice—well-pleasing to God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Acceptable giving* :—It is related of Andrew Fuller that, on a begging tour for the cause of missions, he called on a certain wealthy nobleman to whom he was unknown, but who had heard much of Fuller's talents and piety. After he had stated to him the object of his visit, his lordship observed that he thought he should make him no donation. Dr. Fuller was preparing to return, when the nobleman remarked that there was one man to whom, if he could see him, he thought he would give something for the mission, and that man was Andrew Fuller. Mr. Fuller immediately

replied, "My name, sir, is Andrew Fuller." On this the nobleman, with some hesitation, gave him a guinea. Observing the indifference of the donor, Mr. Fuller looked him in the face with much gravity, and said, "Does this donation, sir, come from your heart? If it does not, I wish not to receive it." The nobleman was melted and overcome with this honest frankness, and taking from his purse ten guineas more, said, "There, sir, these come from my heart." Men should give to the cause of missions cheerfully. They should do good with a good motive. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." (*J. Whitecross.*)

Ver. 19. *My God shall supply all your need.—The need and the supply.*—Paul declares that the contributions of his Philippian friends are pleasing to him, and acceptable to God. He cannot requite their kindness, but declares that God can and will. I. THE EXTENT OF THE SUPPLY. The emphasis is on *all*. 1. There are many promises of this kind even in the Old Testament. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly," &c. But in all their fulness we find them only in the gospel, where Christ tells us that our heavenly Father knows our need, and caring as He does for sparrows and lilies will much more care for us. 2. This promise is exceeding broad. It is not restricted—(1) In the nature of its object, but comprehends temporal and spiritual good. (2) Nor in the absolute measure of the good it possesses; not your occasional, but your constant need; not one kind, but every kind; not a portion, but all. 3. It is possible to misinterpret the promise. We are not to make it the ground of foolish expectations. God will not do for us what we can do for ourselves, nor gratify our whims. The promise has a just and obvious limit. God will supply our need. He does more, but does not engage to do so; and He is the final and righteous Judge of what our needs are. We may not feel the want of what God sees we require. We may desire wealth, or health of body, but God may see that we need spiritual riches and health of soul, and to give the latter He may have to withhold the former. Take the case of Paul who prayed for deliverance from his thorn in the flesh. God's response was grace to bear it, and Paul saw that his need was supplied, and then gloried in his infirmity. II. ITS MEANS.—"riches in glory," or "glorious riches," a phrase indicative of the wealth of Deity; but more than this, for behind the works of His hand there is the uncreated wealth of His own infinity. Here we come to an ocean without a bottom or shore. What we see gives us a small idea of the Divine possibility. Notwithstanding all that God has given, His ability to give remains undiminished. III. ITS MEDIUM. The passage is sometimes made to read "out of" His riches and glory. This is true, but what Paul means is that our need is supplied by a certain method. We are under a mediatorial government. By Christ God made the worlds. Through Him, too, comes daily bread and daily pardon. The promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Apart from Him there is no mercy to any one. Prayer is only heard as offered in His name. IV. ITS CERTAINTY. There is no doubt or contingency: God shall do it. Some one has said that the apostle here draws a bill on the exchequer of heaven that God will make the wants of the Philippians His own care. Rather let us say that he draws a bill which he is assured God will honour the moment it is presented in believing prayer. What are the grounds for this? 1. The apostle knew that God loved His own children with a peculiar love, and was therefore sure to take care of the Philippians. 2. He knew that God approved of their act, and would therefore compensate them. 3. He knew his own standing with God. We have friends for whom we can say that "for our sakes" they would do what we desire, and God thus puts Himself in human conditions and enables Paul to claim Him as his own. (*J. Stacey, D.D.*) *Our need and supply.*—I. EXAMINE THE SCOPE OF THE PROMISE. There is danger of fanaticism in the interpretation of truth. God promises to supply our needs, but not to gratify our wishes or whims. II. THE SUPPLY is not according to our deserts, but according to the riches of His glory: *i.e.*, His glorious wealth. The resources of the Trinity are drawn upon. Jesus bade His disciples to ask, that their joy might be full. He does not delight in a sad, starved Church, but in one that is joyful, well-fed. III. THE MEDIUM. Through Christ. But God ordains means and puts us under conditions. As in agriculture, so here, we are to work in harmony with God's established methods, if we would secure fruits. (*M. Staple, D.D.*) *Man's needs and God's wealth.*—I. MAN'S NEEDS AND GOD'S WEALTH. 1. Man's needs are—(1) Physical. There is no creature with so many wants. (a) The creatures far beneath him have not so long and so helpless an infancy, and acquire much sooner the

means of self support. (b) There are successive births in the same life. Man passes from one stage to another, higher and still higher; but he never reaches the platform where he finds perfection. (c) We may learn the greatness of his nature from the character of his wants. He must have a world made for him and all things in it must serve him. (d) His needs are constantly recurring. He has marvellous powers of receptivity. The world may empty its treasures at his feet, and yet leave crying needs. (2) Social. Life can only develop itself by clinging to other forms of life. The affections require some object round which to twine, and thus give beauty to life. The words father, mother, brother, &c., represent the needs of his social nature. Let him be deprived of any of these and he ever after feels that he is poor. (3) Mental. The mind in its best state is like the garden of Eden; but it may be like a wilderness which brings forth only thorns. It needs teachers, books, culture; the libraries of the world represent its needs. (4) Moral. (a) Man is a sinner, and that is enough to express his utter poverty. He needs nothing short of God's great salvation. He has left his Father's house and gone into a far country, and having spent all, he begins to be in want. (b) With the new life there are new capacities. He wants light—the conditions of life—and God who commanded the light to slune out of darkness must shine in our heart. He wants love—God. Nothing short of the Infinite can satisfy him. (c) There are great changes in this life which give birth to great needs. (d) There are needs which stretch into the future. Man has time, he wants eternity; he has earth, he wants heaven; he has houses and lands, he needs “an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” He wants the perfect life, without suffering, without sin, without sorrow. 2. God's wealth. How poor all words are in describing the riches of God, the boundless wealth of His nature. (1) There are some figures that help us; there is the sun. God is our Sun. The sun pours light not only on the tops of the mountains, but into the depths of the valleys; gives colourings to the countless leaves that quiver in mighty forests, and kindles the incense of the world. There are the pulsations of the ocean. In its fulness it pours its tide on our shores, and its waters flow on till they have filled every bay and creek and inlet. The pulsations of God's goodness are felt through the universe: “The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.” (2) There are some titles that help us, such as the “God of hope,” the “God of peace,” the “God of all comfort,” the “God of all grace,” the “Father of mercies,” the “Father of lights.” But what a revelation of God's wealth we have when we are told “God is love.” His promises represent His wealth, and are convertible into realities any day and any hour. His gospel reveals His purposes, His thoughts, His grace. Do you want mercy? “He keepeth mercy;” it is treasured in His nature as in a storehouse. Strength? “He giveth power to the faint.” Truth for your understanding? There are revelations as you are able to bear them, visions regulated by the soul's capacities to see them. Love for your heart? Build a sanctuary, let its dimensions be vast, for in proportion to the greatness of the temple will be the manifestations of the Divinity. Get up into one of the world's highest mountains and look around, and then claim all. II. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE HIGHEST LIFE SHOWS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE NEEDS OF MAN AND THE WEALTH OF GOD. 1. The life of the apostle illustrates our text. One class of needs creates another, and if the highest are supplied the others can be endured. The man who wrote the text had suffered every kind of need, and had therefore large conceptions of human want; but his need had been supplied, and therefore he had large conceptions of God's wealth. 2. We have the best illustrations of this in his prayers. We may learn from the prayers of men how great the wealth of God must be. “God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” If our needs took outward form, what endless processions we should see going up to the throne of God, all asking. What prayers have gone up from tabernacle, temple, venerable sanctuaries, the pavements of which are worn by generations of kneeling worshippers. What prayers have gone up from men in the depths, from men in the height! What prayers we have heard prayed from our fathers and mothers! What prayers we have prayed. The answers to these reveal the connection between man's needs and God's wealth. III. WITH WHAT CERTAINTY THE APOSTLE SPEAKS. This certainty must have come from his faith in God. 1. In the affluence of the Divine life. The universe is but the outward clothing of the thought of God. The gospel with its provision for the need of man is the revelation of the heart of God, and the outpouring of its love. 2. In the benevolence of the Divine nature, wherever God proclaims His name, He makes His goodness to pass before men. If our relationship to our children is the

proof of our willingness to give them good gifts, how much more so in regard to God. 3. In the inexhaustibleness of the Divine resources. God is a fountain always overflowing: if the streams should fail there would be a universal bankruptcy of life. IV. WITH WHAT INTENSE SATISFACTION THE APOSTLE SPEAKS. He had a large mind and heart, and fitly represented the genius of Christianity. There are some who think only of themselves, and appear to value the gospel all the more because they limit it to a few. If they have bread, they care not if the whole race starves; if they are saved, they care not if the whole world is lost. But this treasure was placed in the apostle's hands and in ours that man may be enriched. Our need supplied is an assurance that God will supply the need of every man. V. GOD SUPPLIES OUR NEEDS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. How much more precious gifts are when they come through the hands of those who love us. (*H. J. Bevis.*) *Man's need supplied from God's riches.*—I. MAN'S NECESSITY. Strictly speaking, all creatures are equally indigent, whether sinners or saints. Out of God there is no self-sufficiency. But circumstances, though they cannot add to our inherent emptiness and dependence, may add materially to our necessities, and that in three ways. 1. When a creature is placed in a situation unfavourable to his happiness. An infant, *e.g.*, in his mother's arms, is as needy as want and helplessness can render it, but take it from its mother and cast it into the sea and it needs to be rescued as well as nourished; a deliverer as well as a mother. 2. When there is something within himself counteracting his welfare. A sick man needs more help than one in health; a man with a wounded spirit more comfort than one with a mind unwrung. 3. When he is destined for a high station. A monarch's son requires more care in training than a peasant's. A barbarian does well enough in his native woods, but set him apart for a high state of civilization and you add to him many wants. Put these three things together and we shall have some idea of the extent and urgency of the Christian's need. We are in a state unfavourable to our happiness; there is sin within us; we are designated for a station for whose pursuits we have naturally no desire. We are needy as creatures, as sinful creatures, as redeemed creatures. II. GOD'S WEALTH. The apostle has not in his mind all the blessings which God possesses in Himself, but those which are adapted to our present state of want and our future state of exaltation—gospel blessings, "the riches of His grace," the mercies offered to sinners. 1. The figure contains two ideas. (1) Their abundance. It is not one or two pieces of gold that make a man rich, nor power to relieve one or two beggars. There must be large resources. And where is the want for which God's gospel does not offer a remedy? Where the blessing He is not able to bestow? Millions on millions can no more exhaust His store than we with the hollow of our hand could empty the sea. (2) Their excellence. We do not deem worthless things riches however abundant. A mass of sand would never be called a treasure. And what so precious as God's mercies? We can no more estimate their value than their abundance. We can no more say "We know their utmost worth" than "We have taken them all." 2. Why are they called "riches in glory?" Perhaps the term (1) may refer to heaven, the storehouse of spiritual blessings. (2) Or it may be equivalent to "glorious riches." In this case it may mean that these riches (a) are magnificent as well as excellent and abundant. (b) That they bring glory to their possessors, and are honourably acquired and spent. (c) That they are glorious in their tendency and use. They not only come out of glory but lead to it—whereas earthly riches are often debasing and injurious. III. THE SUPPLY FOR THIS NECESSITY OUT OF THIS WEALTH. This supply is—1. Certain. 2. Abundant. Not according to our necessities but to God's riches; suited to His character not ours; commensurate with His magnificence rather than with our poverty and meanness. 3. Adapted to our real, not imaginary need. 4. Through Christ. (1) He purchased them for us. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. (2) He receives them for us as our representative. (3) He bestows them on us. It is the connection it has with Christ that makes this supply certain, for it is the stipulated reward of His sufferings; abundant, for those sufferings were of infinite worth; glorious, because its bestowal brings glory to Him. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Provision for the way.*—Joseph filled his brethren's sacks with corn, which they were to carry home with them. But in addition he gave them "provision for the way." This, compared with the other, was a small thing, but the other would never have reached home without it. So we know that there is a glorious portion in the heavenly Canaan, but we have a wilderness journey to provide for: and Jesus, our Covenant Joseph, who has charge of the treasures of heaven, has not forgotten this. I. THE NATURE of this provision. 1. This is

embodied in the word "need." This is all that God undertakes to provide for. There are many things that others have that we should like; there are many things that we feel we could make good use of if we had them; there are many things that our pride, ambition, desire for self-indulgence prompt us to crave, but we do not find them in this provision. 2. This word need has a variety of meanings which take their shape from the character and aim of the person to whom it refers. The man who goes to business with the consciousness that by twelve o'clock he has a note to take up for five thousand dollars—needs that amount of money. The mariner needs favouring breezes to aid him in reaching port. The farmer needs rain and sunshine to ripen and mature the grain. And so in the case of the Christian. His need does not take in what will minister to present gratification, but what will be useful in promoting his eternal interest. What this is God only knows and can give. 3. The psalmist teaches us the meaning of the word when he says, "No good thing" will God withhold from His people. But this good thing may mean disappointment, sickness, poverty. But whatever the soul's interest requires is our need. II. ITS EXTENT. This will be best illustrated by scriptural examples. 1. Job's need could only be supplied by passing through a peculiar experience; but it was supplied. He was led into the furnace, supported through it, and brought out of it. 2. Noah's need could not be met without a demand on faith and obedience such as had never been made before. But Noah believed and obeyed God, built the ark and was saved. 3. Jacob's need could only be met by Joseph's being governor of Egypt, and this involved much grief. 4. Abraham's need could only be met by the stern call to offer up his son, and the result of that action will follow him throughout eternity in untold blessings. 5. And so with Moses, David, Daniel, Jonah, and Paul. III. THE RULE by which this provision is regulated. It would have been a great thing had the apostle said, "According to His riches in grace." These riches are marvellous, and show us what God is doing for His people here. But "riches in glory" point to what He will hereafter do for us in heaven. These "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." When St. John gazed through the veil he only tells us of the foundations and walls of the heavenly home as made of precious jewels; its gates of pearls, and streets of gold; and then leaves us to infer what the "riches in glory" must be. Tempted, burdened, needy Christian, the riches lavished on yonder home are pledged for thy supply. IV. THE AGENT by whom this provision is administered. How tenderly God has considered our comfort in constituting Christ the agent. With whom could the administering of this supply be so safely left as with Him? 1. How able He is to help. 2. How willing. 3. How ready. 4. How close and always at hand. V. ITS CERTAINTY. This is the promise of the God of eternal truth. Did His promise ever fail? Can the scripture be broken. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *Sure supplies* :—I. God is RICH—gloriously rich. 1. In life. He is the living God. 2. In the power of imparting life—a fountain that can never be exhausted. 3. In strength. "Is anything too hard for the Lord." 4. In knowledge and wisdom. "Oh, the depth," &c. 5. In mercy. "He spared not His own Son." 6. In all that constitutes goodness. 7. The earth is full of His riches—there is not a poor province in creation. 8. He is rich in possession, for "all things were created by Him and for Him." 9. Rich without obligation to another, for "of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." 10. This gloriously rich God is our Father, and to His boundless wealth His firstborn had free access. But they became prodigal, and all their younger children have trodden in their steps, and now we have not free access to the whole of our Father's wealth. We now inherit God's glorious riches by Christ Jesus, and become heirs of God by becoming joint heirs with Him. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S SUPPLIES ARE SURE. This is secured—1. By the source—God. (1) The ordinary sources of supply to us are ever changing and multiplying as we advance. The first we recognize is that which we denominate "my mother"; then "my father"; then "my teachers"; then "my books and companions"; then "my trade or profession"; then "my husband, wife, friends, country, Church." (2) But these are only subordinate sources of supply—cisterns which cannot long hold water. My mother and father—their days are as grass; my friends—how many are worthy of the name; my daily calling—if it yield bread enough is a weariness; the happy wife may become a widow; upon your country you may have to turn your back; the Church may be a wilderness to you. With everything you now term "my" you may be disappointed and disgusted. (3) But Paul is positive that this source shall never fail, because it cannot. 2. By the channel—Christ Jesus. (1) When our supplies fail the channel is sometimes at fault and not the source. The supply

of fuel in midwinter sometimes fails, not, because the coal fields are exhausted, but because the snow blocks the railways. The supply of water or gas may be insufficient, not because the reservoirs are low, but because the pipes are broken. A good scheme perishes through bad agents; and though sure of the source if we be doubtful of the channel we can never speak confidently of the supply. (2) But in this case we are as sure of the channel as we are of the source. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," 3. By the scale of distribution. "According to His glorious riches." (1) Human supplies are not always according to means. The rich husband will sometimes supply his wife so sparingly that the wife of the working man is less straitened. Not according to their wealth do some parents educate their children, but according to their niggardliness. Wealthy masters remunerate their servants according to their own selfish hearts. Offerings cast into God's treasury are often only "according to necessity." But when we find men supplying the need of others according to their resources we are sure that they are kind and liberal, and are sure to supply the need of all that are dependent upon them. (2) Now God gives "according to His glorious riches." Not as the poor give, in the abundance of their poverty; not as the rich, when they give grudgingly; not according to our low views, restrained prayer, or feeble faith; not according to any liberality we see in each other. If the gloriously rich God give according to His wealth we may say with confidence, "My God shall supply," &c. **III. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS ESSENTIAL TO CONFIDENCE IN HIM.** There are few things in which we are oftener disappointed than the resources of our supplies. This is especially the case with men who look for patrons to carry them forward. The power to help is overestimated: disappointment comes and confidence is wrecked. Now this man knew God, and that knowledge was the basis of his trust. He had looked to God for the supply of his need of wisdom, guidance, protection, strength, &c., and God had supplied it. With this personal experience of the riches of the Divine liberality, he says, "My God shall supply all your need." (*S. Martin.*) **Comfort for the needy:**—I. YOUR NEED—is great—diversified—constant. II. THE SUPPLY—suitable—seasonable—abundant. III. THE SOURCE OF SUPPLY—certain—inexhaustible—free. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Filling the empty vessels:**—I. SET OUT THE EMPTY VESSELS. 1. It is not supposed that you need to borrow other people's needs: you have enough of your own. Set them out—in a long row, all of them. Needs for your body and needs for your soul; needs for your families, for the present, for the future, for time, and for eternity. Your needs are as many as your moments and the hairs of your head. 2. Some of these empty vessels are large and are growing larger. Our wants grow upon us. One loaf sufficed once: it would not go far at your table now: the loaves vanish there like snow in the sun. You have more infirmities. You never needed so much as you do now. 3. Some of these needs, if supplied to-night, would be empty vessels to-morrow morning. Yesterday's old patience is stale stuff. You must grow more of that sweet herb in your garden. We are like the fabled vessels of mythology that were so full of holes that the fifty daughters of Danaus could never fill them. 4. Some of our needs are very pressing. Bring, then, your urgent needs. Set them all out in this row of empty pots. II. WHO IS TO FILL THESE EMPTY VESSELS? My God will supply all your need. Nobody else can. He can. Paul says: See, my God has supplied me. He will also supply you. Paul's God is the God of providence. He is also the God of grace. He that spared not His own Son, shall He not with Him freely give us all things? He is also the God of heaven. The riches of nations are as rags and rottenness in comparison with His resources. III. IN WHAT STYLE WILL GOD SUPPLY HIS PEOPLE'S NEEDS? IV. BY WHAT MEANS DOES THE LORD FILL HIS PEOPLE'S NEEDS? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **The Christian's want and supply book:**—On a tradesman's table I noticed a book labelled "Want Book." What a practical suggestion for a man of prayer! He should put down all his needs on the tablets of his heart, and then present his want book to his God. If we knew all our need, what a large want book we should require! How comforting to know that Jesus has a supply book, which exactly meets our want book! Promises, providences, and Divine visitations, combine to meet the necessities of all the faithful. (*Ibid.*) **God will supply our need:**—The Rev. Hansard Knollys was among the Christian ministers, who, in the seventeenth century, were the subjects of persecution. He was prosecuted in the High Commission Court and fled to America; whence after a time he returned. Having lived for some time in obscurity in London, he had but sixpence left, and no prospect for the support of his family. In these circumstances he prayed, encouraged his wife to remember the past goodness of God, and to reflect

on the promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee"; paid his lodging and then went out, like Abraham, not knowing whither he went. He had walked only a few steps, when he was met by a woman who told him that some Christian friends had prepared a residence for him and his family, and had sent him money and other comforts. They were impressed with this manifestation of Divine goodness to them, and his wife exclaimed, "O dear husband! how sweet it is to live by faith, and trust God's faithful word! Let us rely upon Him whilst we live, and trust Him in all straits."

The faithfulness of God:—Rev. J. Brown, of Haddington, said that his epitaph might appropriately be, "Here lies one of the cares of Providence, who early wanted both father and mother, and yet never missed them." (*Thomas Cooper.*)

Sufficiency of the Divine resources:—God is satisfied with Himself, and sufficient to His own happiness. Therefore, surely, there is enough in Him to fill the creature. That which fills an ocean will fill a bucket; that which will fill a gallon will fill a pint; those revenues which will defray an emperor's expenses are enough for a beggar or poor man. (*T. Manton, D.D.*)

The nearness of the provision:—Ability and willingness to help are not sufficient of themselves. They must be always at hand just when and where we may require them. How often the help of earthly friends fails just here. We see this strikingly illustrated in the case of Hedley Vicars. He was wounded in one of those sanguinary conflicts before Sebastopol. His wound was not necessarily mortal. The surgeon understood the nature of the wound perfectly. He felt sure that it could be cured, and he was perfectly ready and willing to do all he could for his suffering friend. But still Hedley Vicars died of that wound. And why? Because in the hurry and tumult of that terrible morning, on the gray heights of the Crimea, the regiment which Hedley Vicars commanded was carried far away from the tent that held the supplies. A bandage was needed to tie up the bleeding artery. But this bandage was in yon distant tent; and ere the tent could be reached, the brave Christian soldier was no more. In speaking of this circumstance afterwards, at a public meeting in England, one of the friends of the departed hero said, with the pathos of true affection, "If there had been a bandage within reach—if the tent of supplies had been half a mile nearer, Hedley Vicars might have been alive to-day." There was knowledge, and power, and willingness to help. But just the one thing needed was not at hand, and so there was a failure to meet the pressing need. But such a thing can never occur with Him in whose hands our supply is left. (*R. Newton, D.D.*)

The exactness of the Divine supply:—Harms of Hermannsburg, the pastor of a poor village on the Luneberg Heath in Hanover, said in his annual missionary sermon in 1857: "I have expended much in the past year in sending out the ship with her fifteen passengers, for the printing house, the press, and the paper, altogether 14,781 dollars, and I have received altogether 14,796 dollars, so I have fifteen dollars over. Is not that a wonder? So much spent, and yet something over! And I thank God that He has given us the fifteen dollars overplus. Riches only makes cares. God has heard all my prayers. He has given me no riches, and I have also no debts. We have neither collected nor begged, but waited patiently on God in prayer."

Christ adapted to human need:—You cannot name a noble figure, a sweet simile, a tender or attractive relationship, in which Jesus is not set forth for the comfort and encouragement of His people. Are we wounded? He is balm. Are we sick? He is medicine. Are we naked? He is clothing. Are we poor? He is wealth. Are we hungry? He is bread. Are we thirsty? He is water. Are we in debt? He is our Surety. Are we in darkness? He is our Sun. Have we a house to build? He is the Rock on which to build it. Have we a black and gathering storm to face? He is a strong tower to which we may flee and be safe. Are we to be tried? He is our Advocate. Is sentence passed, and are we under condemnation? He is our pardon. To deck Him out and set Him forth Nature culls her finest flowers, brings her choicest ornaments, and lays these treasures at His feet. The skies contribute their stars. The sea gives up its pearls. From fields, and rivers, and mountains, earth brings the tribute of her gems—her gold, her frankincense and myrrh, the lily of the valley, the clustered vine, and the fragrant rose of Sharon. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*)

Mercies still left:—There was a man who came over from New York some years ago, and threw himself down on a lounge in his house and said, "Well, everything's gone." They said, "What do you mean?" "Oh," he replied, "We have had to suspend payment; our house has gone to pieces—nothing left." His little child bounded from the other side of the room and said, "Papa, you have me left." And the wife, who had been very sympathetic, and very helpful, came up and said, "My dear, you have me left."

And the old grandmother, seated in a corner of the room, put up her spectacles on her wrinkled forehead and said, "My son, you have all the promises of God left." Then the merchant burst into tears and said, "What an ingrate I am! I find I have a great many things left. God, forgive me." (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The promise should inspire fearlessness in Divine service*:—Your business—you cannot neglect that! Call to mind the story of the rich English merchant to whom Elizabeth gave some commission of importance, and he demurred to undertake it, saying, "Please, your majesty, if I obey your behests what will become of these affairs of mine?" And his monarch answered, "Leave those things to me; when you are employed in my service I will take charge of your business." So it will be with you. Do but surrender yourself to Christ, and He, of His own free will, takes in hand all your affairs. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Neglect of the promise*:—Many years ago, an aged and ragged Indian wandered into one of our western settlements, begging for food to keep him from starving. A bright-coloured ribbon was seen round his neck, from which there hung a small dirty pouch. On being asked what it was, he said it was a charm given him in his younger days. He opened it, and took out a worn and crumpled paper, which he handed the person speaking to him for inspection. It proved, on examination, to be a regular discharge from the Federal army, entitling him to a pension for life, and signed by General Washington himself. Here was a man, with a promise duly signed, which, if presented in the right place, would have secured to him ample provision for the way; and yet he was wandering about hungry, helpless, and forlorn, and begging for bread to keep him from starving! What a picture we have here of many Christians, who, with all the promises of Jesus in their hands—with the charter of their inheritance in full possession, are yet gloomy, and sad, and starving in the wilderness! (*R. Newton, D.D.*)

Vers. 20-23. Now unto God and our Father.—*The spirit in which to close the year*:—I. THE DOXOLOGY. 1. We are to give glory to God as to our heavenly Father. We are not to regard Him as a tyrant, nor as a governor merely, but as a kind and loving Father. 2. We are to give Him the glory, that is, the honour and praise, of all His mercies to us. II. BENEDICTION. Grace is the love of God as displayed in Christ, whereby we receive all those unmerited favours which are included in the gospel plan of salvation. 1. The beginning of religion is grace. 2. Its progress in the soul depends upon grace. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Parting thoughts should embrace*—I. THANKS TO GOD. II. LOVE TO THE BRETHREN. III. PRAYER FOR GRACE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) Observe—I. THE GLORY OF GOD—is absolute—full of grace—eternal. II. ITS ACKNOWLEDGMENT—is due from all—in truth—for ever. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Glory is due*—I. To God—as supreme—as our Father. II. FROM ALL—in heaven—and on earth. III. FOR EVER—in time—and eternity. IV. IN SINCERITY AND TRUTH—amen. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 21. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.—I. THE DESCRIPTION OF A TRUE BELIEVER. 1. He is a saint, i.e., a separated one. (1) So God regards him as taken out of the world and set apart for Himself. (2) So God employs him. He is a chosen instrument. While God uses all men to accomplish His general designs, none but Christians are told off for special spiritual uses. (3) So the world esteems him; sometimes satirically, sometimes injuriously, as exhibiting a contrast, but often genuinely. There are certain things which will never be said or done in the presence of a Christian. (4) He becomes more and more saintly: by watchfulness, avoidance of sin, separation from the world, consecration to God. 2. He is in Christ Jesus. (1) Here he enters a new world and enjoys new experiences, thoughts, &c. (2) He lives a new life, higher, purer, nobler. (3) Here he has a charmed existence. Christ guides, protects, supports Him. (4) He has the promise of a rich reward. With Christ here is to be with Him for ever. 3. But only in Christ Jesus is he a saint. (1) Not in his own resolution, endeavours, achievements. (2) But in the enjoyment of Christ's life, participating in His Spirit, cleansed in His blood, following His example. II. THE DEMOCRACY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 1. Our Lord established a society of those who believed in Him on the earth, and that society is still recognized by visible signs. There are many belonging to Christ who have not joined themselves to any body of believers. It is a bad thing to stand outside in that way, waiting for a perfect Church. If you should find it and be admitted to it, it would from that day be imperfect. 2. This Church is not a monarchy as Rome has tried to make it; nor an oligarchy ruled by

a few. It is a pure true republic. In it all believers are equal before the law. True, it is a theocracy. God governs it. It is subject to Christ; but His will is exerted over individuals according to their voluntary actions. The earliest Church realized it. The latest church will realize it. Every saint is in Christ Jesus. What higher honour can they have. This implies equality of status, privilege, responsibility, and reward. III. THE SALUTATION. Recognize every saint. There are no lines of demarcation between saints. 1. Theological differences are often fictitious. If a man be in Christ he is my brother, whatever creed he may profess. 2. Neither are ecclesiastical lines to be drawn between saints. What matter if a man has been dipped in Jordan or sprinkled, whether he calls himself by one name or another in the army of the saved ones. Because a man chooses to wear one style of livery we are not to stand aloof and say, "I will not salute you." 3. Let not selfish ends divide saints. Look not so much at the name, wealth and quality, rank, &c., as to the saint side of everybody. 4. What business in the Church of God have jealousy, recriminations, criticism. "Bless and curse not." Speak as well as you can for every saint; and when you cannot, keep quiet. (*S. H. Tyng, D.D.*) *True Christians have*—I. ONE CENTRE—Christ. II. ONE CHARACTER—saints and brethren. III. ONE HEART—they love one another. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you.—The earlier ages of the Church were marked by a spirit of love; so that Christians actually regarded themselves as all members of one family. The moment a man embraced Christianity, he was regarded as a brother by the whole Christian body: a thousand hearts at once beat kindly towards him; and multitudes, who were never likely to see him in the flesh, were instantly one with him in spirit. The love of Christians because they are Christians, no regard being had to country or condition—is this still a strongly marked characteristic of those who profess themselves the disciples of the Redeemer? There was something very touching and beautiful in Christ's promise to such as should forsake all for his sake—"He shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands." Thus was strikingly verified a description long before given of God by the Psalmist: "He setteth the solitary in families"—for they who were to all appearance abandoned, left orphaned and alone in the world, found themselves surrounded by kinsmen. The criterion of genuine Christianity remains just what it was: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. In our own time the ends of the earth are being wondrously brought together: there is an ever-growing facility of communication between country and country; and this must rapidly break down many barriers, and bring far-scattered tribes into familiar intercourse. In earlier times, nation was widely divided from nation: the inhabitants of different lands were necessarily almost strangers to each other; and you could not have expected an approximation to universal brotherhood. But then it was, in the face of all obstacles to personal communion, that the spirit of Christianity showed its comprehensive and amalgamating energies; the name of Christ was as a spell to annihilate distance; to plant the cross in a land, sufficed to make that land one with districts removed from it by the diameter of the globe. Alas for the colder temper of modern times! We have been led into these remarks, from observing, in the apostolical writings, the affectionate greetings which the members of one Church send to those of another. For the most part, these Churches had no intercourse the one with the other; they were widely separated by situation; and, had it not been for the bond of a common faith, their members would have been as much strangers as though they had belonged to different orders of being. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*)

Ver. 22. Chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household.—These words—I. REMIND US OF THE ADAPTATION OF THE GOSPEL TO MEN EVERYWHERE. 1. It is no part of God's purpose in redemption to limit its blessings to a nation or class. Hence the provisions of the gospel are suited to the circumstances of man as man. It knows nothing of the distinctions of rich and poor, noble and ignoble, learned and ignorant, bond and free. It knows them only as sinners, and offers salvation to all on equal terms. Hence in the early Churches we find slaves like Onesimus, fishermen like Peter, physicians like Luke, lawyers like Zenas, soldiers like Cornelius, and saints in Cæsar's household. 2. The gospel is still of universal adaptation. Christ is still the Saviour of sinners, and has disciples in every country and amidst all circumstances and conditions. II. TEACHES US THE POSSIBILITY OF SERVING GOD IN POSITIONS OF TEMPTATION AND DIFFICULTY. 1. Cæsar's household was the last

place where one would have expected to find saints. Under any circumstances it could not be favourable to conversions and Christian growth; and it was now at about its worst. It illustrates the sovereignty of Divine grace that out of these circumstances there should arise witnesses for the gospel. It must have required great courage; but the grace that called them sustained them. 2. So it is always. There are some positions in which a man cannot serve God because they are wrong. There are others lawful enough, yet encompassed by temptation, *e.g.*, the position of the sailor shut up for months with ungodly shipmates, that of the pious soldier in barracks with ungodly comrades, that of a godly citizen among scoffing fellow workmen. In all such cases God is able to make all grace abound to His servants. Faint not. God by placing you in a post of trial has assigned to you a post of honour. Never try to effect a compromise between right and wrong. III.

TELLS HOW THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST ANIMATES ALL HIS FOLLOWERS. That spirit is love and sympathy. See how it breathes through these brotherly salutations. The age wants more of this spirit. What Christ requires is not so much uniformity of belief and worship as union of heart. IV. ILLUSTRATES THE WAY IN WHICH CHRISTIANS MAY COMFORT AND HELP ONE ANOTHER. 1. The Philippians needed comfort. They had adversaries and were in danger of being terrified by this. The letter itself would afford deep consolation, this postscript especially so. The salutation was not much, but it showed that they were not forgotten at the throne of grace. 2. In many ways comfort and help may be afforded if there be only a little thoughtfulness. A truly sympathetic heart can give help with a look and a grasp of the hand. A too common sin is thoughtlessness. "Evil is wrought by want of thought, as well as want of heart." The youth in the midst of scoffing companions, the young girl in an ungodly house, the poor man battling with poverty, the discouraged Christian worker—what might not be done by a timely and kind word. V. A SUGGESTION OF THE WAY IN WHICH OUR CONDUCT BECOMES AN EXAMPLE AND INFLUENCE TO OTHERS. Little did the Roman saints think that their salutations would be preserved and handed down through the centuries for the use of the Church. Kind words can never die. Neither can kind actions. Our names may perish but we shall live. Who these saints were we cannot tell. Nevertheless their power is felt to-day. (*W. Walters.*)

*The saints in Cæsar's household:—*The throne of the Cæsars was at this time occupied by Nero, a monster rather than a man. Certainly if ever there was an atmosphere uncongenial to Christianity it may be supposed to have been that of the court and palace of this bloody debauchee. Yet so true is it that gospel weapons are mighty to the casting down of strongholds that there were here Christians of the highest type willing to give their profession all publicity by sending greetings to Christians in distant cities. I. THE AGENCY WHICH BROUGHT ROUND SO UNLIKELY A RESULT. The mind naturally turns to Paul's miraculous gifts, and remembers how with noble intrepidity Paul rose up before the sages of Greece, and that as he spoke to Felix, the slave of base lusts, the haughty Roman trembled. It is easy to imagine, therefore, Paul working some great miracle to command the attention of the emperor and the court, and then reasoning of temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come. But this fancy would be incorrect. Paul was now a prisoner, and could not go like Moses, rod in hand, and compel by his miracles the attention of the profligate king, and yet it was at this time of seeming impotence that the great victory was won. Nay, it appears actually to have been in consequence of his imprisonment. Chap. i. 12-14 shows the two ways in which his bonds gave enlargement to Christianity. His patience and meekness witnessed for the truth of the gospel for which he suffered, and nerved the Christians to greater energy. II. WE HAVE HERE A LESSON AS TO GOD'S POWER OF OVERRULING EVIL FOR GOOD. We are apt to imagine when a man is withdrawn from active duty that his usefulness is gone. But a minister can preach from a sick bed as well as from a pulpit. The report which goes forth of his patience and fortitude will do as much and perhaps more towards overcoming resistance to the gospel than his active ministrations. The martyrs did most for God and truth when actually in the clutches of their persecutors. A true Christian is never laid by. The influence that he exerts when suffering or reduced to poverty is often greater than when he led a benevolent enterprise. Let no one then be discouraged. III. A MAN CANNOT BE PLACED IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH PUT IT OUT OF HIS POWER TO GIVE HEED TO THE DUTIES OF RELIGION. The instance of saints in Cæsar's household takes away the excuse that temptations, hindrances, opposition render piety impossible. Where are any so circumstanced as these people? It is true that more appears to be done for one man than for

another, and that some circumstances are conducive and others hindering to religion. But under every possible disadvantage there may be a striving with evil and a following after good. The excuse assumes that God has put it out of some men's power to provide for their soul's safety, and to assume this is to contradict the Divine word, and to throw scorn on the Divine attributes. Take a case like the one before us, that of servants in an irreligious family. Their superiors set them a bad example, give them few opportunities for public or private devotion, and would frown on or ridicule any indication of piety. Let this be granted. Yet these difficulties would disappear before earnest resolve. They have but to begin and obstacles would be gradually lowered and strength would grow by exercise. The Spirit of the living God fails no man who is not false to himself. IV. THESE SAINTS not only belonged to Cæsar's household at the time of their conversion, but REMAINED AFTER THEIR CONVERSION. They did not feel it their duty to abandon their stations and seek others apparently more favourable to religion. So that it does not follow that a man is to withdraw from circumstances of danger and difficulty, and place himself where there is less temptation and opposition. It is true a converted man is not justified in seeking employment where it would be specially difficult to cultivate religion; but to desert it because it made religion difficult would be to declare that the grace which had converted him in spite of disadvantages would not suffice to establish him, and to mark distrust of God's Spirit. If the employment were sinful, there would be no room for debate; but if only dangerous, and simply required a greater amount of vigilance and boldness, to forsake it would prove timidity rather than prudence. For, *e.g.*, a Christian nobleman in a corrupt court, or servant in an ungodly family, may find it unlawful to leave, inasmuch as distinct opportunity may be afforded of doing honour to God and promoting Christ's cause. They are placed by God as leaven in the midst of an unsound mass. Not that a servant has to travel beyond the duties of his station; he has simply to carry his Christianity into all his occupations, and to distinguish himself from others by closer attention to his master's interests, stricter adherence to truth, &c. Let an irreligious master perceive all this, and he will scarcely fail to receive an impression favourable to religion. There are families to which the preacher can gain no access. God forbid that pious domestics should hastily withdraw from such. V. WHERESOEVER GOD MAKES IT A MAN'S DUTY, THERE HE WILL MAKE IT HIS INTEREST TO REMAIN. If He employ one of His servants in turning others from sin, He will cause the employment to conduce to that servant's holiness. Notice the "chiefly" of our text. Of all the Roman Christians the foremost in love were these saints who probably remained in Cæsar's service for the express purpose of furthering the gospel. Nor need we feel any surprise at this. Absence of trial is not the most favourable thing to religious growth. Nero's palace may be a far better place for the development of personal piety than the cell of the monk; in the one the Christian has his graces put continually to the proof, and this serves both to discover and strengthen them; in the other there may be comparatively nothing to exercise them. And then the God of all grace, who has promised that His people shall not be tempted above that they are able, will bestow assistance proportioned to their wants. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Saints in Cæsar's household*:—I. IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE A CHRISTIAN ANYWHERE. 1. Christianity is not a thing of locality but of character. There are plants which will bloom in some latitudes and die in others, but Christianity can live where man can live, because it consists in the loyalty of the heart and life to Christ. Obadiah kept his conscience in the house of Ahab, Daniel his in the court of Babylon, Nehemiah his in the Persian palace. As Jonathan Edwards says, "The grace of God can live where neither you nor I can." In the abodes of poverty humble Christians are living as near to God as Enoch. Even yet, if we care to look for it, we may find the lily among thorns. 2. What is true of places is true of occupations. Unless a man's business is sinful he may serve God in any profession. The Roman army was a very poor school of morals, yet all the centurions mentioned in the New Testament were good men. The sailor is proverbially rough, yet some of the best Christians have been sailors. What heroic godliness has been manifested by miners? 3. Now, if this be so it follows—(1) That we must not be prejudiced against a man because of the locality he comes from. What peril Nathaniel nearly incurred because he thought Jesus came from Nazareth. Test a man by what he is, not by what he comes from. (2) That we ought not to excuse ourselves for our lack of Christianity by pleading the force of circumstances. How often do we hear one saying, "It is no use trying to be a Christian where I am." But it is never necessary to do wrong. Sin is a

voluntary thing, and no external force can constrain a man to commit it. One comes home intoxicated and pleads that he met some friends and had to go with them; another excuses his extravagance on the plea that he must keep up appearances; a third excuses his dishonourable practices because he is in danger of bankruptcy. But if you cannot help doing wrong it is not wrong, but it is the consciousness of being able to help it that makes you so eager to use the excuse.

II. IT IS HARDER TO BE A CHRISTIAN IN SOME PLACES THAN IN OTHERS. There are households in which it seems most natural for a child to grow up in the beauty of holiness, and others where loyalty to Christ is met with opposition. The surroundings of some occupations are more trying to piety than others. When the lymphatic Dutchman, who took things easily, said to his excited minister, "Dominie, restrain your temper," he was met with the pertinent reply, "Restrain my temper, sir! I restrain more temper in the course of a single day than you do in a year." That was a difference of temperament. What then? 1. The Lord knows that this is so, and He will estimate our work by our opportunity. We may be sure that if we are in a hard place He will give us strength according to our need. Each gets his own grace. "Ilka blade of grass has its ain drap o' dew," and grace is suited to the place in which one dwells. 2. We ought to be charitable in our judgment of each other. While we hold ourselves to a rigid reckoning in all circumstances, let us make allowance for the circumstances of others. The flower in the window of a poor man's cottage may be far from a perfect specimen, but it is a greater marvel than the superb specimen in a rich man's conservatory. There may be more honour to one man for the Christianity he has maintained in the face of great obstacles, though it may be marked with blemishes, than there is to another who has no such blemishes, but who has had no such conflict.

III. THE HARDER THE PLACE IN WHICH WE ARE WE SHOULD BE THE MORE EARNEST TO MAINTAIN OUR CHRISTIANITY. Here, however, it is needful to know what the hardest place is. It is not always that where there is the greatest external resistance to Christianity. An avowed antagonist the Christian meets as such; he prepares himself for the encounter, and is not taken unawares; but when the ungodly meet him as friends, then he is in real peril. The world's attentions are more deadly than its antagonisms. The Church is in the world as a boat is in the sea; it can float only by being kept above it; and if we let it become waterlogged it will be swamped.

IV. THE GREATER THE DIFFICULTY WE OVERCOME IN THE MAINTENANCE OF OUR CHRISTIANITY THE GREATER WILL BE OUR REWARD. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*)

Sainthood in Nero's household:—1. This incidental allusion informs us that already Jesus was confessed before emperors; men that in irresponsible power and savage cruelty had almost lost the nature of men. Faith has won its greatest conquests on straitened and sorrowful fields. 2. If the strength and joy of believing are proportioned to the weight of the crosses born for it, then in some such post as this we must look for the bravest witnesses to the truth. 3. We eulogize virtues that flourish only in a favourite soil and climate. We palliate and excuse the deficiency, when honesty is missing in the household of Cæsar. We forget that the piety of the Church and of society dwindles inevitably unless it is replenished by the energy of those valiant examples which will dare to be true in the palaces of power, and fashion, and mammon. 4. There are yet saints in Cæsar's household, and there is as good cause to venerate them as when beasts licked up their blood from the sand. For the substance of all sainthood which has vitality enough to live in Cæsar's household is this, that its virtue is so built on interior foundations, and its faith so rooted in its Divine Master, that no outward opposition can break it down. 5. There are special traits essential to sainthood in Cæsar's household. I. COURAGE. Christianity has favour for every noble sentiment; and so she offers to the veteran soldier, and to the enthusiastic youth, a field for bravery grander than any battle, in the resistance of moral invasion. Accordingly, we find that, very soon, Christianity seized on rough warriors, and some of these believers about the person of Nero must probably have been guards of his palace. On one of the early Christian monuments at Rome there is an epitaph of a young military officer, who "lived long enough when he shed his blood for Christ." But Christ's religion courts no consideration from armies. Its courage is of another kind—the courage that bears wrong, but will not commit it—that saves life, rather than destroys it; that springs from an unspotted conscience; that goes into and out of all companies, counting-houses, caucuses, and churches, with an uprightness not to be bent, whether you bring threats, or sneers, or golden baits to tempt it; that lifts up an unblenched face in the most formidable array of difficulties, satisfied to stand on God's side, to

listen to the encouragement of the beatitudes and to hold to the breastplate of righteousness. Wherever such Christian courage in duty is there will be saints of Cæsar's household. II. MODESTY. They did not call themselves saints; Paul called them so. They did not boast of their religion; there was too much solemn sincerity in it. They did not lurk about the temples to mock the soothsayers, and to disseminate slanders about the priesthood. They knew the joy of their communion with Jesus, and cared more for that than for the admiration of the citizens. That was their Christian modesty. Disjoined from their fortitude, it might have degenerated into timidity. And that is often our danger. There are persons of a diffident disposition, that err in not mixing enough boldness of resistance with their good nature. They remain inefficient disciples because they shrink from public notice. This is to turn "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" into a deformity, and to rob the Master of the testimony that is His due. This is the danger of all threatened minorities, but they will get strength for the fiery trial by going back to see how the inmates of a palace full of gluttony, licentiousness, and all royal vices, held their allegiance fast. III. But to imitate that successful blending of modesty and courage, they will want a third quality, namely, INDEPENDENCE. The question of duty once settled, all gates but that which leads to acting it out must be shut. And beyond that point, all arguments from custom, from the general expectation, from popular applause, from public or private gratification, are impertinent. Remember, these saints were living in the centre of the great world's energy and splendour, and in the very focus of its intelligence. Independence was a virtue quite indispensable to them; but not a whit more so than to us. For, every day, Providence, through our own instincts, pushes us into some crisis of moral peril, where, if we do not act simply of ourselves, and take our direction at first hand from the Spirit, our integrity itself is gone. IV. And superadded to independence and modesty and courage is CONSTANCY. There must have been many days when it would have been easy and convenient for these saints to slip round into the old comfortable heathenism. Inducements were not wanting. For the ignorant there was personal safety. For the cultivated Seneca was alive. But they held fast. They might be hunted out, and see their teachers slaughtered; but they gathered again the next evening, and other hands, willing to be mangled by the same martyrdom, broke to them the bread of life. The emperor might send them out to build his baths; they raised no civil rebellion, but while they bent to their slavery they knelt and prayed to their Father. Arrows might pierce their bodies, but they believed the Lord Jesus would receive their spirits. God is asking constancy of us. Our Nero is self-love. The senses are the Cæsars of all ages. Fashion is a Rome that commissions its legions and spreads its silent empire wider than the Prætorian eagles. The reigning temper of the world is the imperishable persecutor and tyrant of the faithful soul. And so, in every home and street there are chances for the reappearing of saints in Cæsar's household. (*Bishop Huntington.*) *The religion of charity compatible with all callings:*—Notice that the "chief" salutations came from the unlikelyst place. It is a rebuke to some who think that Christianity pervades one state of life more than another. At times men have thought that the Christian religion was peculiarly suitable to the poor, and had nothing to do with the officers of Cæsar's household. Christ preached at first to the lowly, yet wise and rich were also called. If saints are found in Cæsar's household where shall they not be found? But men go sighing to find the proper soil for religion, and go to the desert to be religious, and think that when a man is a beggar he must be nearest heaven. I. CHRISTIANITY HAS AFFINITY WITH ALL CALLINGS. 1. With riches, because the great grace of charity can be exercised thereby. Whoso has charity in his heart and wealth in his hand has the finest gift of God. 2. With statesmanship, although it is common to say that that is a very uncongenial atmosphere for a Christian. But a statesman can put an end to the foul obstructions that hinder truth; he can make laws that men shall be no longer housed in conditions that make righteousness impossible. 3. With the soldier, though some think not. Though the day will come when war shall be at an end, nevertheless he who goes forth in a good cause stirred by the spirit of verity to do righteousness in the spirit of order, obedience, and self sacrifice, between him and the Christian faith are strong affinities. 4. With retirement. Christianity has much to say about the blessings of quiet existence, in deepening the wells of life. 5. With business. The merchant may be the most eminent missionary. 6. With art. The artist who gives relief to the tired eye and brain, who preaches the God of eternal beauty, and the spirit which underlies all visible things, is in harmony

with our faith. II. WHEREIN CONSISTS THIS UNITY BY WHICH THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST HAS AN AFFINITY WITH EXTREMELY OPPOSITE CHARACTERISTICS? 1. Let us wander seemingly for a time and answer this question by asking another. It is not whether this or that calling or characteristic be holy or not, but what is that holiness which justifies us in calling it holy? A man may be a sweeper of chimneys or the holder of a sceptre; but the sceptre may be swayed in righteousness, and so may the besom. The righteousness of each depends on the degree to which each embodies in his calling that which constitutes righteousness. 2. To do a good action three things are essential. (1) That you know what you are doing. (2) That you do it from choice. (3) That you have firmness and perseverance to do the like at all times. 3. Having knowledge, intention, and persistence in the performance of that which is just and wise, the question becomes this—What is that which, put into voice or action, constitutes it an act in accord with the Christian faith? Christianity pronounces it to be charity. Charity means the large, loving, constant doing of all things great and small. It is the universal spirit to which there is nothing great or small. A king through charity may sway the sceptre, and a room may be swept to the glory of God. So in Cæsar's household and Peter's fishing hut, it is possible to be filled with that which constitutes the spirit of religion. Therefore it is a matter of indifference what your calling may be. If you are scandal-mongers, indeed, is it impossible to be charitable, because you violate the first principles of charity. When one lives not in constant piety one goes back to Cæsar's household and thinks who they were. (*G. Dawson, M.A.*) *Christianity*:—I. IS HOLY—it makes men saints. II. MIGHTY—it enters the palace. III. FEARLESS—it stands before Nero. IV. KIND—it teaches love. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The composition of Cæsar's household*:—The household of the emperor consisted mainly of troops and of slaves who ministered to his wants and caprices as the wealthiest and most luxurious of Roman magnates. But senators and knights were also in close attendance upon him, equally in his hours of business and relaxation. These, indeed, were probably masters of households of their own; thus Seneca, the most intimate of his ministers, enjoyed a private residence in his gardens; Burrus, the prefect of the Prætorians, whose duty brought him, no doubt, daily into the imperial presence, occupied his own lodging in the Prætorian camp. The affairs of government were transacted chiefly by the emperor's freedmen, some of them notorious for their riches and influence, court favourites who had been enfranchised by himself or his predecessors. These also had each his own palace and gardens, in which he vied with the proudest of the ancient aristocracy. Nevertheless these, too, were so closely attached to the emperor's person that they might claim to form a part of Cæsar's household, and any one of them may have come in contact with Paul. A man of Paul's power of thought and language, speaking with the academic tone of a scholar of Tarsus, and the natural fervour of a Hebrew prophet, could hardly fail to command the attention of the feverish students of moral truth who abounded in the ranks of the Roman aristocracy. But if such turned away he could not fail to be received among the lower class of the emperor's household attendants, both male and female, who filled a thousand menial offices about his person, and that of his consort. The ministers to the luxury of Poppæa were certainly not less numerous than those who discharged similar functions for Livia before her. Among them were servants of the chamber and the ante-chamber, servants who waited at the doors, who attended at the bath, who assisted at the toilet, who kept the jewels, who read at the empress's couch, who sat at her feet, who followed her in her walks, who lulled her to sleep and watched over her slumbers, who had charge of her purse, and distributed the tasks of the whole household. The persons in waiting on the emperor were probably even more multitudinous, and while many of their functions were merely manual, there were not a few entrusted with affairs which required high intellectual training. The emperor was surrounded with numerous members of the learned classes such as could discharge the duties of secretaries, physicians, professors of every art and accomplishment and teachers in philosophy. To have access to Cæsar's household was to be put into communication with the most intelligent people of the day. Over Paul's intercourse with these people a cloud rests, but it so happens that recent excavations have discovered the names of various persons connected with the court of Claudius which are identical with those which the apostle mentions in his Epistle to the Romans. We find among these names those of Amphas, Urbanus, Stachys, Apella, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Rufus, Hermas, Potrobius (Patrobas), Philologus, and Nereus. Some of these, no doubt, are very common appellatives; but the occurrence of

so many coincidences can hardly be accidental. And the easy and familiar way, in which the apostle introduces the mention of "the saints in Cesar's household," seems to imply that he stood on an easy footing with them. It is the style of one who went in and out among them, of a man who dwelt close at hand; accessible daily as they passed by on their ordinary avocations. (*Dean Merivale.*)

Ver. 23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.—*The benediction*:—I. ITS CONTENTS—grace. II. ITS COMPREHENSIVENESS—it embraces all. III. ITS POWER—it is yea and amen. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Grace*:—I. ITS SOURCES. II. ITS FULNESS. III. ITS FLOW. IV. ITS POWER. (*Ibid.*) In parting with his readers the apostle wishes them to possess the grace of the Lord Jesus; that grace which—I. BLESSES AND CHEERS. II. STRENGTHENS AND CONSOLATES. III. At last RIPENS INTO GLORY. (*Prof. Eadie.*)

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

I. THE CHURCH TO WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN.—1. The locality and people. A rich canton of Southern Phrygia, in particular the small basin of the Lycus, a tributary of the Meander, saw some active Christian centres formed within it. Three towns very close to each other—Colossæ, Laodicea, and Hierapolis—filled it with life. Colossæ, which in old days was the most important, appeared to decline; it was a town which remained faithful to ancient ways, and did not renew itself. Laodicea and Hierapolis, on the contrary, became, in consequence of the Roman Empire, very considerable cities. The very soul of all this beautiful country is Mount Cadmus, the patriarch of all the mountains of Western Asia—a gigantic mass, full of dark precipices, and keeping its snows all the year round. The waters which flow down from it freshen one of the slopes of the valley, upon which are orchards filled with fruit trees, traversed by rivers full of fish, and enlivened with storks which are quite tame. The other side is quite given up to the strangest freaks of nature. The encrusting properties of the calcareous waters of one of the affluents of the Lycus, and the enormous mass of hot water which falls in a cascade from the mountains of Hierapolis, have struck the plain with sterility, and formed crevasses, quaint caverns, beds of subterranean streams, fantastic piles, and layers like petrified snow, serving as a reservoir for waters which reflect all the colours of the rainbow; deep hollows whence far resounding waters rush on in a succession of cataracts. On this side the heat is extreme, the soil being nothing but one vast plain paved with calcareous blocks. But upon the heights of Hierapolis, the purity of the air, the splendid light, the view of Mount Cadmus, swimming like another Olympus in a lustrous atmosphere, the burnt-up summits of Phrygia fading into the blue heaven in a rosy tint, the opening of the valley of the Meander, the oblique outlines of Messogis, the far white summits of Tmolus, produce a truly dazzling effect. There lived St. Philip and Papias; there Epictetus was born. All the valley of the Lycus presents the same character of dreamy mysticism. The population was not Greek by origin; it was partly Phrygian. There was also round Mount Cadmus an old Semitic settlement. Jewish colonies had been transplanted from Babylon two centuries and a half before, and had first brought with them some of those industries (carpet weaving, &c.) which, under Roman Emperors, produced in the country such opulence and such powerful guilds or companies. Christianity followed, and remained for three centuries the religion of the country. A great number of the Christians of Ephesus and Rome came from Phrygia. The names most frequently found upon Phrygian monuments are the old Christian names, Trophimus, Tychicus, Tryphena, Onesimus. (*E. Renan.*) 2. The origin, growth, and circumstances of the Church. There is no ground for supposing that when Paul wrote this Epistle he had ever visited the Church, but if he was not directly its evangelist, it was indirectly indebted to him for its knowledge of the truth. Epaphras had been his delegate, and by Epaphras the Colossians had been converted to the gospel (chap. i. 6). How or when their conversion took place we

have no direct information. Yet it can hardly be wrong to connect the event with St. Paul's long sojourn at Ephesus (A.D. 54-57). It is possible that during this period he paid short visits to neighbouring cities, but if so these interruptions to his residence in Ephesus must have been slight and infrequent (Acts xx. 18). Yet though the apostle himself was stationary, his teaching and influence spread far and wide (Acts xix. 10, 26), and the first Epistle to the Corinthians contains salutations, not from Ephesus alone, but from the "Churches of Asia" generally (1 Cor. xvi. 19; cf. 2 Cor. i. 8; Rom. xvi. 5). To Ephesus, as the metropolis of Western Asia, would flock crowds from all the towns and villages far and near. Thence they would carry away, each to his own neighbourhood, the spiritual treasure they had unexpectedly found. Among the places thus represented at the Asian metropolis would doubtless be the cities lying in the valley of the Lycus. The bonds of amity between these places and Ephesus were unusually strong. The "Concord of the Laodiceans and Ephesians," the "Concord of the Hierapolitans and Ephesians," are repeatedly commemorated on medals struck for the purpose. Thus the Colossians, Epaphras and Philemon, the latter with his household (Philem. 1, 2, 19), and perhaps also the Laodicean Nymphas (Col. iv. 15) would fall in with the Apostle to the Gentiles, and hear from his lips the first tidings of a heavenly life. But whatever service may have been rendered by Philemon at Colossæ or by Nymphas at Laodicea, it was to Epaphras especially that all three cities were indebted for their knowledge of the Gospel (chap. iv. 12, 13), and he looked upon himself as responsible for the spiritual well-being of all alike. We pass over a period of five or six years. St. Paul's first captivity in Rome is now drawing to a close. During this interval he has not once visited the valley of the Lycus. Two circumstances, one affecting his public duties, another private and personal, at this time conspired to bring Colossæ prominently before his notice. (1) He had received a visit from Epaphras, whose mind was alarmed at the dangerous condition of the Colossian and neighbouring Churches. A strange heresy had broken out and was spreading rapidly. The faithful evangelist, therefore, came to Rome to seek Paul's counsel and assistance. (2) But at the same time St. Paul was also in communication with another Colossian, who had visited Rome under very different circumstances. Onesimus, the runaway slave, perhaps accidentally, perhaps through Epaphras, fell in with his master's old friend. The apostle interested himself in his case and transformed him from a good-for-nothing slave (Philem. 11) into a faithful and beloved brother (Col. iv. 9; cf. Philem. 16). This combination of circumstances called Paul's attention to the Churches of the Lycus and more especially to Colossæ. (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

II. WHERE, WHEN, AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES IT WAS WRITTEN.—There are in the Epistle indications of the time and place of writing similar to those found in Ephesians and Philippians. It was written in prison (chap. iv. 10, 18). Like the former it is sent by Tychicus, with precisely the same official commendation of him (chap. iv. 7-8, cf. Eph. vi. 21-22); but with him is joined Onesimus, the Colossian slave, the bearer of the Epistle to Philemon. The persons named in the concluding salutations (chap. iv. 7-14) correspond, with the exception of Justus, with those mentioned to Philemon (vers. 23, 24); two of them, Aristarchus and Luke, are known to have accompanied the apostle on his voyage as a captive to Rome (Acts xxvii. 2), and another, Tychicus, to have been his companion on the journey to Jerusalem, which preceded the beginning of that captivity at Cæsarea (Acts xx. 4). A direction is given to forward this Epistle to Laodicea, and to obtain and read a letter from Laodicea (chap. iv. 16), which is, in all probability, our Epistle to the Ephesians, an encyclical letter addressed to sister Churches. All these indications point to one conclusion—not only that Colossians is one of the Epistles of the first captivity (A.D. 61-63), but that it is a twin Epistle with the Ephesians, sent at the

same time and by the same hand, and designed to be interchanged with it in the Churches of Colossæ and Laodicea. (*Bishop Barry.*)

III. ITS OCCASION AND SUBJECT.—To the apostle's lodgings there comes a brother from Colossæ, Epaphras by name, who brings with him bad news which burdens Paul's heart with solicitude. Many a night would he and Epaphras spend in deep converse on the matter, with the stolid Roman legionary to whom Paul was chained sitting wearily by. The tidings were that a strange disease, hatched in that hot-bed of religious fancies, the dreamy East, was threatening the faith of the Colossian Christians. A peculiar form of heresy, compounded of Jewish ritualism and Oriental mysticism, was being vigorously preached. The characteristic Eastern dogma, that matter is evil and the source of evil, had begun to infect them. The conclusion was quickly drawn that God and matter must be antagonistic, and so the creation and government of this world could not have come directly from Him. The endeavour to keep the pure Divinity and the gross world as far apart as possible, while yet an intellectual necessity forbade the entire breaking of the bond between them, led to the busy working of the imagination, which spanned the void gulf with a chain of intermediate beings, emanations, abstractions, each approaching more nearly to the material. Such notions made wild work with the plainest moral teachings of conscience and Christianity. For if matter be the source of all evil, then the fountain of each man's sin is to be found not in his own perverted will, but in his body; and the cure of it is to be reached, not by faith, which plants a new life in the sinful spirit, but simply by ascetic mortification of the flesh. Strangely united with these teachings were the narrowest doctrines of Jewish ritualism, insisting on circumcision, laws regulating food, the observance of feast days. It is a monstrous combination, a cross between a Talmudical rabbi and a Buddhist priest, and yet it is not unnatural that, after soaring in these lofty regions of speculation, where the air is too thin to support life, men should be glad to get hold of the externals of an elaborate ritual. Extremes meet. If you go far enough east you are west. But what does all this matter to us? The truth which Paul opposed to these heresies is all-important for every age. It was simply the Person of Christ as the only manifestation of the Divine, the link between God and the Universe, its Creator and Preserver, the Life and Light of men, the Lord and Inspirer of the Church. Christ has come, laying His hand upon both God and man; therefore there is no need or place for a misty crowd of angelic beings or shadowy abstractions to bridge the gulf across which His incarnation flings its single solid arch. Christ has been bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, therefore that cannot be the source of evil in which the fulness of the Godhead has dwelt as in a shrine. Christ has come, the fountain of life and holiness, therefore there is no more place for ascetic mortifications nor for Jewish scrupulosities. To urge these and the like truths this letter was written. Its central principle is the sovereign and exclusive mediation of Jesus Christ, the God-man, the victorious antagonist of these dead speculations, and the destined conqueror of all the doubts and confusions of this day. If we grasp with mind and heart that truth, we can possess our souls in patience, and in its light see light, where else is darkness and uncertainty. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

IV. ITS GENUINENESS.—1. The external testimony is considerable. The following verses are quoted or referred to in the Apostolic Fathers: chap. i. 16 by Barnabas; ver. 18 by Clement; ver. 25 by Ignatius; chap. iii. 4 by Ignatius, and ver. 14 by Clement. Marcion, the earliest herald of sceptical criticism, who rejected Timothy and Titus, admitted Colossians and Philemon. It is cited by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and still earlier by Theophilus of Antioch and Justin Martyr. All candid criticism agrees with M. Renan's conclusion that the Epistle

is "to be received unhesitatingly as the work of St. Paul." (*Bishop Alexander*.) 2. Internal evidence. None but Paul could have written it. To say that it is un-Pauline in doctrine is to make an arbitrary assertion, since it states no single truth which is not involved in his previous teachings. The fact that it is a splendid development of those teachings, or rather an expanded statement of them to meet new exigencies, is simply in its favour. Nor do I see how any one familiar with the style and mind of St. Paul can fail to recognize his touch. That the style should lack the fire and passion of the Epistle to the Galatians, and the easy, fervent overflowing of thought and feeling in those to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, and Philippians, is perfectly natural. Of all the converts to whom Paul had written, the Colossians alone were entire strangers to him. He had not, indeed, visited Rome, but many members of that Church were personally known to him, and he was writing on a familiar theme which had for years been occupying his thoughts. The mere fact that he had already written on the same topic to the Galatians would make his thoughts flow more easily. But in writing to the Colossians he was handling a new theme, combatting a recent error, with which among Christians he had not come into personal contact, and of which he merely knew the special characteristics at second hand. When in the Epistle to the Ephesians he reverts to the same kind of conceptions, his sentences run with far greater ease. The style of no man is stereotyped, and least of all is this the case with a man so many sided, so emotional, so original as St. Paul. His manner reflects to an unusual degree the impressions of the time, place, mood in which he was writing. A thousand circumstances unknown to us may have given to this Epistle that rigid character, that want of spontaneity in the movement of the sentences which led even Ewald into the improbable conjecture that the words were Timothy's, though the subject and the thoughts belong to Paul. But the difference of style between it and other Epistles is no greater than we find in the works of other authors at different periods of their lives, or than we daily observe in the writings and speeches of living men who deal with different topics in varying moods. (*Archdeacon Farrar*.)

V. ITS RELATION TO THE OTHER EPISTLES.—1. To the other Epistles in general. Each of Paul's greater Epistles has its one salient thought. In that to the Romans it is justification by faith; in Ephesians it is the mystical union of Christ and His Church; in Philippians it is the joy of Christian progress; in this Epistle it is the dignity and sole sufficiency of Jesus Christ as the Mediator and Head of all creation and of the Church. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) 2. To the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is in exact psychological accordance with the peculiarities of St. Paul's mind and style that, if, after writing a letter which was evoked by peculiar circumstances, and led to the development of particular truths, he utilized the opportunity of its despatch to send another letter, which had no such immediate object, the tones of the first letter would still vibrate in the second. When he had discharged his immediate duty to the Church of Colossæ, the topics dwelt upon in writing to the neighbouring Churches would be sure to bear a close resemblance to those which had most recently been occupying his thoughts. Even apart from special information St. Paul may have seen the desirability of warning Ephesus and its dependencies against a peril which was infusing its subtle presence within so short a distance from them; and it was then natural that his language to them should be marked by the very differences which separate the Epistle to the Colossians from that to the Ephesians. The former is specific, concrete, and polemical; the latter is abstract, didactic, general. The same words and phrases predominate in both; but the resemblances are far more marked and numerous in the practical exhortations than in the doctrinal statements. In the Epistle to the Colossians he is primarily occupied with the refutation of an error; in that to the Ephesians he is

absorbed in the rapturous development of an exalted truth. The main theme of the Colossians is the Person of Christ; that of the Ephesians is the life of Christ manifested in the living energy of His Church (Col. ii. 19; Eph. iv. 16). In the former Christ is the "Plentitude"—the synthesis and totality of every attribute of God. In the latter, the ideal Church, as the body of Christ, is the Plentitude, the recipient of all the fulness of Him who filled all things with all. Christ's Person most prominent in the Colossians; Christ's body in the Ephesians. (*Archdeacon Farrar*.) The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians deal with the same lines of truth; they differ only in the method of treatment. That to the Ephesians is devotional and expository; that to the Colossians is polemical. In the Colossians the dignity of Christ's Person is put forward most explicitly as against the speculations of a Judaizing theosophy which degraded Christ to the rank of an archangel, which recommended as a substitute for Christ's redemptive work ascetic observances, grounded on a trust in the cleansing and hallowing properties and powers of discipline. In the Epistle to the Ephesians our Lord's personal dignity is asserted more indirectly. It is implied in His reconciliation of Jews and heathens to each other and to God, and still more in its relation to the predestination of the saints. In both Epistles we encounter two prominent lines of thought, each in a high degree pointing to Christ's Divine dignity. The first, the absolute character of the Christian faith as contrasted with the relative character of heathenism and Judaism; the second, the recreative power of the grace of Christ. In both Epistles the Church is considered as a vast spiritual society (Col. i. 5, 6) which, besides embracing as its heritage all the races of the world, pierces the veil of the unseen, and includes the families of heaven (Eph. iii. 15) in its majestic compass. Of this society Christ is the Head (Eph. i. 22, 23). He is the predestined point of unity to which earth and heaven, Jew and Gentile, meet and are one (Eph. i. 10). His death is the triumph of peace in the spiritual world. Peace with God is secured through the taking away of the law of condemnation by the Cross (Col. ii. 14, 15). Peace among men is secured because the Cross is the centre of the regenerated world as of the moral universe (Col. i. 20, 21). (*Canon Liddon*.)

VI. ITS CONTENTS.—The following is an analysis of the Epistle. **I. INTRODUCTORY.** 1. Opening salutation (i. 1, 2). 2. Thanksgiving for the progress of the Colossians hitherto (i. 3-8). 3. Prayer for their future advancement in knowledge and well doing through Christ (i. 9-13). (This leads the apostle to speak of Christ as the only path of progress.) **II. DOCTRINAL.** The Person and work of Christ. 1. Through the Son we have our redemption (i. 13, 14). 2. The pre-eminence of the Son. (1) As the Head of the natural creation, the universe (i. 15-19). (2) As the Head of the new moral creation, the Church (i. 18). Thus He is first in all things; and this because the *pleroma* has its abode in Him (i. 19). 3. The work of the Son—reconciliation. (1) Described generally (i. 20). (2) Applied specially to the Colossians (i. 21-23). (3) St. Paul's own part in carrying out this work. His sufferings and preaching. The "mystery" with which he is charged (i. 24-27). His anxiety on behalf of all (i. 28, 29); and more especially of the Colossian and neighbouring Churches (ii. 1-3). This expression of anxiety leads him by a direct path to the next division of the Epistle. **III. POLEMICAL.** Warning against errors. 1. The Colossians charged to abide in the truth of the Gospel as they received it at first, and not to be led astray by a strange philosophy which the new teachers offer (ii. 4-8). (In the passage which follows (ii. 9-23) it will be observed how St. Paul vibrates between the theological and practical bearings of the truth.) 2. The truth stated. (1) Positively. (a) The *pleroma* dwells wholly in Christ and is communicated through Him (ii. 9-10). (b) The true circumcision is a spiritual circumcision (ii. 11, 12). (2) Negatively. Christ has—(a) annulled the law of ordinances (ii. 14). (b) Triumphed over all spiritual agencies, however powerful (ii. 15). &

Obligations following thereupon. (1) Consequently the Colossians must not—(a) either submit to ritual prohibitions (ii. 16, 17); or, (b) substitute the worship of inferior beings for allegiance to the Head (ii. 18, 19). (2) On the contrary, this must henceforth be their rule. (a) They have died with Christ; and with Him they have died to their old life, to worldly ordinances (ii. 20-23). (b) They have risen with Christ; and with Him they have risen to a new life, to heavenly principles (iii. 1-4). IV. HORTATORY. Practical application of this death and resurrection. 1. Comprehensive rules. (1) What vices are to be put off, being mortified in this death (iii. 5-11). (2) What graces are to be put on, being quickened by this resurrection (iii. 12-17). 2. Special precepts. (1) The obligations of wives and husbands (iii. 18-19); children and parents (iii. 20-21); of slaves and masters (iii. 22-iv. 1). (2) The duty of prayer and thanksgiving; with special intercession on the apostle's behalf (iv. 2-4). (3) The duty of propriety in behaviour towards the unconverted (iv. 5-6). V. PERSONAL. 1. Explanations relating to the letter itself (iv. 7-9). 2. Salutations from divers persons (10-14). 3. Salutations to divers persons. A message relating to Laodicea (15-17). 4. Farewell (18). (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

VII. ITS USEFULNESS IN RELATION TO ERROR IN ALL AGES. The so-called "Gnosticism" with which this Epistle deals is nothing more than a form of error—a phase of the crafty working of systematic deception—which is common to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual aberrations of all ages and countries. It is found in the Zend Avesta, in Philo, in Neoplatonism, in the Kabbala, in Valentinus. Abject sacerdotalism, superstitious ritual, extravagant asceticism, the faithlessness which leads men to abandon the privilege of immediate access to God, and to thrust between the soul and its One Mediator all sorts of human and celestial mediators; the ambition which builds upon the unmanly timidity of its votaries its own secure and tyrannous exaltation; the substitution of an easy externalism for the religion of the heart; the fancy that God cares for such barren self-denials as neither deepen our own spirituality nor benefit our neighbour; the elaboration of unreasonable systems which give the pompous name of Theology to vain and verbal speculations drawn by elaborate and untenable inferences from isolated expressions of which the antinomies are unfathomable, and of which the true exegetic history is deliberately ignored; the oscillating reactions which lead in the same sect, and in even the same individual to the opposite extremes of rigid scrupulosity and antinomian license—these are the germs not of one but of all the heresies; these are more or less the elements of nearly every false religion. The ponderous technicalities of the systematizer; the interested self-assertions of the priest; the dreamy speculations of the mystic; the Pharisaic conceit of the externalist; the polemical shibboleths of the sectarian; the spiritual pride and narrow one-sidedness of the self-tormentor; the ruinous identification of that saving faith which is a union with Christ and a participation of His life with the theoretic acceptance of a number of formulæ—all these elements have, from the earliest dawn of Christianity, mingled in the tainted stream of heresy their elements of ignorance, self-interest, and error. In their dark features we detect a common resemblance. There was Gnosticism in the days of Paul as there is Gnosticism now, though neither then nor now is it recognized under that specific name. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*)

THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

COLOSSIANS.

CHAPTER I.

VERS. 1-5. Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.—The assertion of St. Paul that the afflictions of the faithful "work together for good" is verified by constant experience (Rom. viii. 28; Psa. cxix. 71). As roses, the sweetest and fairest flowers, grow on a thorny stock, so from the piercing afflictions of the believer spring sweet and salutary examples. The imprisonment of St. Paul has done the Church more good than the prosperity of the rest of the faithful of that age. I. **THE INSCRIPTION OF THE EPISTLE.** We now inscribe letters with the names of those to whom we write at the beginning, and our own names at the end. Formerly it was the custom to put both at the head as here. 1. The writers. Paul—(1) an apostle, signifying one sent, but in the New Testament more particularly those sent by Christ with sovereign and independent authority to preach the gospel and establish the Church. To exercise this office it was necessary—(a) to have seen Christ alive after His death; (b) to have received the commission direct from Christ; (c) to enjoy an extraordinary measure of the Holy Spirit for miracles and preaching. Whence it appears how illogical they are that attribute the glory of apostleship to the Pope, who possesses none of these qualifications. (2) "By the will of God"—distinguishing him from false apostles and necessary—(a) to maintain his honour against the calumnies of seducers, who alleged that he had not lived in Christ's day; (b) to establish his liberty to write to the Colossians and prove to them their duty. (3) To his own name Paul adds that of Timothy "our brother," as having the same faith, and labouring in the same work. 2. The readers. (1) Saints. You cannot be Christians unless you are saints. The body of Christ is too vital and precious to have dead members. (2) Faithful. Another mark of the true Christian, and taken from that faith which they give to the gospel of the Lord. (3) Brethren signifies the holy communion they had with believers of whatever rank, as begotten of the same Father—God; born of the same mother, the heavenly Jerusalem; all partaking of the same Divine nature, nursed in the same family, nurtured in the same hopes, destined to the same inheritance. (4) In Christ, because of Him, and by Him, and in Him we have this sanctity, faith, and fraternity. (5) Paul wishes them, according to his custom, "grace"—the favour of God, and His saving gifts, and Divine assistance; "peace" with God and men, a word which signifies all kinds of welfare and prosperity; "from God our Father" as the source, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the channel. II. **THE CONGRATULATION (VERS. 3-5).** 1. The thanksgiving is for—(1) the faith of the Colossians; (2) their love; (3) their prospects: three particulars which comprise all human felicity. The part which Paul takes in their happiness, teaches us to interest ourselves in the affairs of our brethren, and rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep—not, as many of the world, the reverse. And the joy that we have in the good of others should be elevated to God its only source. 2. It is not enough to render thanks for our brethren, we must pray for them. Under the Old Testament the Divine appellation was "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," the patriarchs with whom He contracted the old covenant, and to whom He promised the new;

under the New, "The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," by whom He has abolished the old covenant and accomplished the new. 3. The true matter of our rejoicings for others is not that God has given them health, riches, fame, &c., but faith and love, which comprise the whole kingdom of God, the one its beginning, the other its accomplishment, and are inseparable the one from the other, the one being the root, the other the fruit of Christian virtue. 4. But considering the worldly condition of these believers, there seemed no great cause to congratulate them on their faith and love, for they drew affliction on them. The apostle therefore turns his eye of faith towards the future, and the blessed inheritance is as certified as though it were already in their hands. A good man's promise is as good as its fulfilment, much more God's. Being in heaven, the Christian's treasure can neither be stolen nor soiled. 5. This sublime hope is derived from the truth of the gospel. So sublime is it that neither sense nor reason, nor the light of the law could have discovered it (2 Tim. i. 10). (*J. Daillé.*) *The writer and the readers.*—Notice—I. THE BLENDING OF LOWLINESS AND AUTHORITY IN PAUL'S DESIGNATION OF HIMSELF. He does not always bring his apostolic authority to mind in his letters. In his earliest, to the Thessalonians, he has not yet adopted the practice. In Philippians he has no need, for it was not gainsaid. In Philemon friendship is uppermost, and he will not command as an "apostle," but pleads as "the prisoner of Christ Jesus." In the rest he puts it in the foreground, as here.

1. He claims the apostolate in the highest sense of the word—equality with the original apostles, the chosen witnesses of Christ's resurrection, for he, too, had seen the Lord, and his whole ministry was built upon the fact. 2. "Through the will of God" is at once an assertion of Divine authority and of independence, and also a lowly disclaimer of individual merit and power. 3. His gracious humility is seen in his association of his young brother Timothy, who has no apostolic authority, but whose concurrence in his teaching might give it some additional weight; but in the fiery sweep of his thoughts, Timothy is soon left out of sight and Paul alone pours out the wealth of his wisdom and the warmth of his heart. II. THE NOBLE IDEAL OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER SET FORTH IN THE DESIGNATIONS OF THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH. In his earlier letters the address is to "the Church," but in his latter, beginning with Romans, and including Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, he drops the word, and uses expressions which regard individuals rather than the community. This did not arise from any lower estimate of "the Church," but advancing years and familiarity with his work, his position, and his auditors, all tended to draw him closer to them, and led to the disuse of the formal and official term in favour of the simpler and more affectionate "brethren." 1. Saints—a word wofully misapplied. The Church has given it as a special honour to a few, and decorated with it the possessors of a false ideal of sanctity—that of the ascetic sort. The world has used it with a sarcastic intonation as if it implied loud professions and small performance, not without a touch of hypocrisy. Saints are not people living in cloisters, but men and women immersed in the vulgar work of every day life. (1) The root idea of the word is not moral purity, but separation to God. Consecration to Him is the root from which the white flower of purity springs. We cannot make ourselves pure, but we can yield ourselves to God, and the purity will come. (2) We have also the idea of the solemn obligation on all so-called Christians to devote themselves to Him. We are not bound to this as Christians; we are not Christians unless we consecrate ourselves. So the term does not belong to an eminent sort of Christians. (3) The one motive which will lead us to bow our necks to the easy yoke, and come out of the misery of self pleasing into the peace of serving God, is drawn from the great love of Christ who devoted Himself, and bought us for His own, by giving Himself to be ours. And if drawn by this we give ourselves to God, He gives Himself to us. "I am thine" has ever for its chord which completes the fulness of its music "Thou art Mine." And so "saint" is a name of dignity. (4) There is implied in it, too, safety. If I belong to God then I am safe from the touch of evil and the taint of decay. 2. Faithful—trustworthy—true to the stewardship or trusting; probably the latter, because faith underlies consecration, and weaves the bond which unites men in the brotherhood, for it brings all who share it into a common relation to the Father. And then he who is believing will be faithful in the sense of being worthy of confidence, and true to his duty, his profession, and his Lord. 3. Brethren. (1) That strong new bond of union among men the most unlike, was a strange phenomenon when the Roman world was falling to pieces, and men might well wonder as they saw the hearts of master and slave, Greek and barbarian, Jew

and Gentile, fused into one glow of unselfish love. (2) But the word points not merely to Christian love, but to the common possession of a new life. It leads straight to the doctrine of regeneration, and proclaims that through faith in Christ men are made children of the highest, and therefore brethren. "To as many as received Him," &c. 4. In Christ: saints, believers, brethren, are in Him as living things are in the atmosphere, the branch in the vine, members in the body, inhabitants in a house, hearts that love in hearts that love, parts in a whole. III. THE APOSTOLIC WISH WHICH SETS FORTH THE HIGH IDEAL TO BE DESIRED FOR CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUALS. "And the Lord Jesus Christ" should be omitted. Perhaps the word "brethren" was lingering in Paul's mind, and so instinctively he stopped with the kindred word "Father." 1. Grace and peace blend the Western and Eastern forms of salutation, and surpass both. All that the Greek meant by his "grace" and the Hebrew by his "peace;" the ideally happy condition which differing nations have placed in different blessings, and all loving words have wished for dear ones, is secured and conveyed to every one who trusts in Christ. 2. Grace means—(1) Love in exercise to those who are below the lover; (2) the gifts which such love bestows; (3) the effects of these gifts in the beauties of character and conduct developed in the receivers. So here first the gentleness of the Father, next the outcome of that love which never visits the soul empty-handed, and as the result every beauty of mind, heart, and temper. "Of His fulness we have received grace for grace." 3. Peace comes after grace. For tranquillity of soul we must go to God, and He gives it by giving us His love and its gifts. There must be first peace with God that there may be peace from God. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) The apostolic salutation:—Pondering this we ask three questions. I. WHAT IT REVEALS ABOUT THE APOSTLE. 1. His dignity: "An apostle by the will of God," a title—(1) Directly derived from God. (2) Abundantly justified—(a) by supernatural visions and experiences; (b) by seals of success. (3) Employed here—(a) Because he was dealing with erroneous teaching, and so needed a claim of authority. (b) He was personally an entire stranger to the Colossians. (c) He writes from prison, and it was well that he should remind himself and them of his dignity. He was a prisoner, but he was none the less an apostle. 2. His condescension: "Timotheus our brother." He was no fellow-apostle, yet his brother; his boyish convert, yet his brother. Great souls never patronize; they elevate men of whatever station or age into brotherhood with them. The Greatest is not ashamed to call us brethren. II. WHAT IT IMPLIES ABOUT THE CHURCH. It recalls to us—1. Its locality and associations. One of the historic Churches in the valley of the Lycus. The town had been famous, but its glory was waning. Xerxes and Cyrus had made it famous, but Paul's letter has made its name known where Xerxes and Cyrus have never been heard of. 2. Its character, which ought to be that of every Church. (1) "Saints." The Old Testament description of Israel applied to Christians to indicate union to God and consecration. (2) "Faithful brethren," indicating union to each other. All freemasonries, guilds, &c., are but hints of what the Church was meant to be. III. WHAT IT SUGGESTS ABOUT TRUE BLESSEDNESS. 1. "Grace" is a Greek thought Christianized. It takes the conception of grace of form, gesture, tone into the spiritual realm. To Paul it has two meanings. (1) It is to be enjoyed as the attitude of God in Christ towards men. It is thus the Divine pity, gentleness, favour; the bearing of a forgiving, condescending, loving God. (2) It is to be possessed as the spirit of a Christian. It is thus "the grace of life," moral beauty, spiritual loveliness. It is the indwelling in human character of more than all that the Greeks conceived in their "three graces." 2. "Peace," which may include—(1) Freedom from persecution—a great desideratum. (2) Absence of internal dissension—one main purpose of the letter. (3) Inward calm of heart, and quiet confidence in God—ideal peace, Christ's peace. The wish of Paul is the gift of Jesus. (*U. R. Thomas.*) I. THE SUPERScription. 1. The writer. (1) His Gentile name, kindred in form and pronunciation to his Hebrew name, was that of an honoured family in Rome. His use of it is evidence of his desire to keep before himself and others the relationship of Jesus to Gentiles, and to show that He was no respecter of persons who gave Himself a ransom for all. (2) His office—messenger of Jesus Christ; not (2 Cor. viii, 23) of the Churches. The expression implies that Christ has a message for universal man, "Go ye into all the world," a message of good news. (3) His Divine authority, "By the will of God," stated to shield himself from the charge that he was running unsent. The best are sometimes misunderstood, mistrusted, and suspected. Although many have no special call, yet all can do something after the

manner of a humble herald to diffuse the glad tidings, and as we have opportunity so responsibility is laid upon us to be up and doing. 2. Paul associates with himself Timotheus the brother, or brother Timothy, not his own in particular, nor theirs, but the Church's universally. The disciples of Jesus are a brotherhood, and every individual should be animated in relation to all the rest with the feelings of a brother or a sister. 3. The parties addressed were—(1) In his judgment of charity, true saints—a fine word meaning “holy ones,” and yet it has been pelted for ages with moral mire. No wonder, for it has been assumed by pretenders, and claimed by people because they lived in cells or wore a certain garb. Unholy men, occupying a certain official position, have been and are obsequiously addressed as “Your Holiness.” Saintliness is not a thing of profession but practice, and springs out of that pure heart which sees God. (2) Faithful brethren in Christ. That was the secret of all their excellencies. We do not say of any one that he is in Luther or Calvin, Paul, David, or Isaiah—but “in Christ.” We may be in love, peace, joy; and in some kindred way we may be in Christ, even as we live, move, and have our being in Him. Conversely, Christ is in us, when He is the object of the faith that is in us. We never fully comprehend Him; but He comprehends us as members are comprehended in the body and branches in the tree. II. THE SALUTATION. 1. A cordial greeting of this kind was common with the apostle. It was no formality or empty inflation. He really felt most kindly towards the Colossians, and hence, with beautiful Christian gentlemanliness, he no sooner names them than he hastens to set them entirely at ease, by letting them feel his cordial friendliness. 2. The salutation is not a supplication, but rather a benediction. In the former we address God, in the latter man. 3. It is twofold—Greek and Hebrew, being a message to both peoples. (1) The word “grace,” though not that which the Greeks employed in their salutation, is intimately related to it. When Greek met Greek politely, they mutually said, “Joy to thee.” The apostle slightly modifies the ordinary Greek phraseology, and lays hold of a word which directs attention to the Divine source of joy. The English “grace,” as is obvious from its two adjectives “graceful” and “gracious,” denotes that which occasions joy. It is connected with *gratitude* and *gratification* as conditions of heart that are inspirations of joy. But the term is employed to denote that greatest joy-giving kindness which when found in the heart of God towards us is the fountain of joy unspeakable. From the constitution of the mind, lovingkindness is pre-eminently fitted to produce joy. (2) The Jewish salutation, “Peace,” is strictly oriental and primitive. It had naturally sprung up when there were no extensive governments or codes of law, when men were apt to be like Ishmaelites wherever they travelled. When they came in view of strangers therefore, if no hostile intent was entertained, it was natural to call out “Peace!” As time rolled on and peoples got consolidated into organized communities, so that life in general became secure, the import of the salutation became gradually and increasingly enriched—equivalent to “May you have peace, and the fruits of it in your home, amongst your friends and neighbours, in your heart.” But as the apostle turned to Jesus, “peace” became that which He gave, that which passed all understanding. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) I. AN EXALTED AND IMPORTANT OFFICE. “Apostle.” Paul was commissioned to declare the grandest truths. His sphere was the world, and to fill it involved incredible care, work, and suffering. The office was created by the circumstances of the time. An ordinary officer can govern a garrison, but it requires a gifted general to marshal an army in line of battle. In the Divine government the occasion calls forth the man. II. THE AUTHORITY THAT DESIGNATES AND QUALIFIES. The will of God is the great originating and governing force. That force called and qualified Paul (*Acts ix.*). In undertaking the highest work for God it is not enough that we possess learning, gifts, piety, without the consciousness of a Divine commission. There are crises when it is necessary to have this to fall back upon. III. A FAMILIAR CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP. “Timotheus our brother.” He was Paul’s “own son in the faith,” but here he recognizes him on the more equal footing of brother. Christianity is a brotherhood; not a communism which drags down all to its own level, but a holy confederacy in which men of all ranks, ages, and talents unite. His equality is based on a moral foundation. The minister whose position is assured loses nothing by honouring his younger brethren. IV. UNITY OF SYMPATHY AND DESIRE. “Paul and Timothy.” The closest intimacy, notwithstanding disparity in rank and ability. V. SUGGESTIVE PHASES OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. 1. Saints. 2. Faithful brethren. Several races are here united in a

holy and faithful brotherhood. 3. The sublime origin of the Christian character "In Christ." VI. THE SALUTATION SUPPLICATES THE BESTOWMENT OF HIGHEST DIVINE BLESSINGS. 1. Grace. A term inclusive of all the blessings that can flow from God. 2. Peace. Grace expresses the spirit in which Divine manifestations come; peace the result they accomplish. (1) Peace with God. (2) Peace with each other—peace in the Church. 3. The source of the blessings desired. The Father's love and the Son's work are the sole source of every blessing, while the Holy Spirit is the agent of their communication. Learn: the broad, deep charity of the apostolic spirit, and the scope and temper of the prayers we should offer for the race. (*G. Barlow.*)

Ver. 2. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ.—*Saints*:—I. THEIR CHARACTER. Holy persons. The idea is derived from the sacred vessels of the temple, which might not be appropriated to common uses. In a more general sense, saints are those who are eminent for piety, not all who are flattered or derided as such. One who is truly a saint—1. Acknowledges that he was once a lost and undone sinner, and who daily brings his sins for pardon and his graces for increase to the throne of grace. 2. Has a new heart and a right spirit. He is a new creature—loving what God loves, and hating what He hates. 3. Is zealous for the cause of His Divine Master. Where there are no spiritual actions there is no spiritual life. The chief motives are fortitude and the constraining love of Christ. 4. Grows in grace. II. THEIR RELATION TO EACH OTHER. 1. There are three kinds of brotherhood—natural, such as that between Esau and Jacob; national, such as existed among the Jews; spiritual, by adoption and grace. The last is the strongest, purest, and most enduring. 2. Of this Christ is the Elder Brother, and as He is not ashamed to own this relationship should we be either in regard to Himself or the poorest member of the family? 3. Love should spring out of this relationship. This is most natural; Christ has made love the badge of Christian discipleship; it is "good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity." 4. Its distinguishing attribute is fidelity. Be thou faithful in defending your brother when defamed, in admonishing him when in the wrong, in helping him in difficulty, in comforting him in trouble. A false brother is worse than an open foe. III. THEIR SITUATION IN THE WORLD. 1. Christians in the midst of heathens, and exposed to temptation and persecution. 2. Believers surrounded by heretics—their faith exposed to subtle undermining and bold attack. 3. Few as against many. Churches are often thus situated, but if they retain their holiness and faithfulness become more than conquerors. (*T. Watson, B.A.*) *Motives to saintliness*:—I. AS OUR GOD IS HOLY SO MUST WE BE (1 Pet. i. 15). II. IT IS THE END OF OUR DIVINE CHOICE (Eph. i. 4). III. OUR CALLING BINDETH US (1 Thess. iv. 7). IV. OUR REDEMPTION (Titus ii. 14). V. THE GRACE OF GOD TEACHES US THIS (Titus ii. 11-12). VI. THE FINAL JUDGMENT PERSUADES US THEREUNTO (2 Pet. v. 11; 1 John iii. 3). VII. THE RIGHT CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH PROHIBITS THE UNHOLY (Matt. vii. 6). Conclusion: 1. This discovers to us the vanity of the Pope in restraining a title common to all believers while they live to some few whom it pleaseth him to canonize after death. 2. We see the lewdness of many profane Esaus who scoff at the name. 3. We must remember what kind of men we must be: even such as must profess and practice holiness. (*P. Bayne, B.D.*) In Christ.—This mystical but most real union of Christians with their Lord is never far away from the apostle's thoughts, and in the Epistle to the Ephesians it is the very burden of the whole. A shallower Christianity tries to weaken that great phrase to something more intelligible to the unspiritual temper and poverty-stricken experience proper to it; but no justice can be done to Paul's teaching unless it be taken in all its depth as expressive of the same mutual indwelling and interlacing of spirit with spirit, which is so prominent in the writings of John. There is one point of contact between the Pauline and Johannine conceptions, on the difference between which so much exaggeration has been expended; to both the inmost essence of the Christian life is union to Christ, and abiding in Him. If we are Christians we are in Him in a profounder sense than creation lives and moves and has its being in God. This is the deepest mystery of the Christian life. To be "in Him" is to be complete. "In Him" we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings." "In Him" we are "chosen." "In Him" God "freely bestows His grace upon us." "In Him we have redemption through His blood." "In Him" "all things in heaven and earth are gathered." In Him is the better life of an *eternal* life. In Him we have peace though the world be seething with changed *all*

storm. In Him we conquer though earth and our own evil be all in arms against us. If we live in Him, we live in purity and joy. If we die in Him, we die in tranquil trust. If our gravestones may truly carry the sweet old inscription, carved on many a nameless slab in the Catacombs, "In Christo," they will also bear the other, "In pace." If we sleep in Him, our glory is assured, "For them also that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **Grace and peace.**—Grace is introductory good; peace is final good: he therefore who wishes these two blessings includes every intermediate benefit. I. **GRACE** denotes—1. The gratuitous act of the Divine will accepting man in Christ and pardoning his sins (Eph. ii. 5; Rom. iii. 24). This free love of God is the first gift in which all other gifts are bestowed. 2. All those habitual gifts which God infuses for the sanctification of the soul. So faith, love, and all virtues and salutary endowments are called graces (Eph. iv. 7). 3. The actual assistance of God, whereby the regenerate, after having received habitual grace, are strengthened to perform good works, and to persevere in faith and godliness. For to man renewed and sanctified by grace, the daily aid of God is still necessary for every single act. The union of all these is necessary: inherent grace is not given unless the grace of acceptance has preceded it; neither being given is it available to the production of fruits, unless also the efficacious help of God follow and accompany it through every individual action. II. **PEACE.** The Hebrews used this expression as we use the expression health or joy: it signifies prosperity marked by no calamities either public or private (Gen. xliii. 27; Psa. cxvii. 6). But with the apostles it is used more extensively, and comprehends more especially spiritual joy and prosperity. Therefore under this term Paul desires for them—1. Internal peace, or peace of conscience, which arises from the grace of God accepting us for Christ's sake (John xiv. 27; Rom. v. 1; Phil. iv. 7). 2. Brotherly peace; "breaking peace they exclude grace." This is a great and desirable good, and is frequently celebrated as the special gift of God (1 Cor. xiv. 33; 2 Cor. xiii. 11). The seeds of schism had been scattered abroad; there was therefore need of peace. 3. That external peace which is the well-being of the Church; but only yet so far as it does not militate against their spiritual good; for sometimes it conduces more to the welfare of the faithful than they be afflicted than that they enjoy external tranquility. III. **WE MAY GATHER**—1. From the order itself, as he places grace before peace, he teaches us—(1) That this is first of all to be desired, that we may have God propitious. If He be hostile, even blessings will be turned into a curse. (2) That true peace cannot belong except to those only who are in favour with God. "There is no peace to the wicked." (3) That all good things which fall to the lot of the godly are streams from this fountain of Divine grace. 2. From the thing itself desired—(1) Paul shows us by his own example the duty of every minister of the gospel; which is, not only to preach grace and peace to his people, but from their inmost souls to intreat and implore the same from God by incessant prayer: neither is sufficient of itself. (2) He reproves the folly of this world, in which almost all wish for themselves and their friends, health, riches, and honours; but grace, peace, and other spiritual good things, they neither regard nor think of. But Christ commands us to seek "first the kingdom of God" (Matt. vi. 33). (3) He comforts the godly and faithful by showing them that the grace of God, and the peace of God they always possess; in comparison of which good things whatsoever fall to the wicked are refuse. "A God appeased," says Bernard, "tranquillizes all things, and to behold Him at peace is to be ourselves at peace. (*Bp. Davenant.*)

Vers. 3-8. We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—*The prelude*:—I. A THANKFUL RECOGNITION OF CHRISTIAN EXCELLENCE AS INTRODUCTORY TO WARNINGS AND REMONSTRANCES. Almost all Paul's Epistles begin thus. Gentle rain softens the ground, and prepares it to receive the heavier downfall which would else mostly run off the hard surface. These expressions are not compliments, or flattery used for personal ends, but uncalculated expressions of affection which delights to see white patches in the blackest character, and of wisdom which knows that the nauseous medicine of blame is most easily taken if wrapped in a capsule of honest praise. All persons in authority may be the better for taking this lesson. 2. The praise is cast in the form of thanksgiving to God, as the true fountain of all that is good in men. All that might be harmful in direct praise is thus strained out of it. Christian excellences are God's gifts. The fountain, not the pitcher, should have the credit of the water. 3. There were two points which occasioned his thankfulness. (1) Faith. This is sometimes spoken

of as "towards" Jesus, which describes the act by its direction, as if it were the going out of man's nature to the true goal of all active being. "On" Christ, describes it as reposing on Him as the end of all seeking. But more sweet is faith considered as "in" Him as its home, where the seeking spirit may fold its wings, be strengthened, and tranquillized. (a) In all, faith is the same—simple confidence. But how unlike are the objects!—broken reeds in the one case, and the firm pillar of Divine power and tenderness in the other. And how unlike, alas! the fervency and constancy of our trust in each other and in Him. (b) Faith covers the whole ground of man's relation to God. Everything that binds us to the unseen world is included in it. (c) From that fruitful source all good will come, and that faith lacks its best warrant which does not lead to whatsoever is of good report. (2) As faith is the parent of all virtue, so it is the parent of love—the whole law of human conduct packed into one word. But the warmest place in a Christian's heart will belong to those in sympathy with his deepest self. The sign on the surface of earthly relations of the central fire of faith to Christ is the fruitful vintage of brotherly love, as the vineyards bear the heaviest clusters on the slopes of Vesuvius. (3) So here we have two members of the familiar triad, and their sister, Hope, is not far off. And the hope laid up in heaven is a motive for brotherly love. This hope is not the emotion, but the object, and the ideas of futurity and security are suggested by that object being laid up. This is not the main motive, but it is legitimate to draw subordinate motives for holiness from the anticipation of future blessedness, and to use that prospect to reinforce the higher motives. II. A SOLEMN REMINDER OF THE TRUTH AND WORTH OF THAT GOSPEL WHICH WAS THREATENED BY THE BUDDING HERESIES OF THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH. 1. He begins by reminding them that to that gospel they owed all their knowledge and hope of heaven. Its sole certainty is built on the resurrection of Christ, and its sole hope on His death. All around us we see those who reject these surrender their faith in the life beyond. 2. The gospel is a word of which the whole subject and contents is truth. It is of value, not because it feeds sentiment or regulates conduct only, but because it reveals knowledge about the deepest things of God, of which, but for it, man would know nothing. It is not speculation, but truth; and truth because it is the record of Him who is "the Truth." "To whom shall we go?" If elsewhere, to will-o'-the-wisps and Babel. 3. This gospel had been received by them. "You have accepted the Word; see that your future be consistent with your past." Blessed are they whose creed at last can be spoken in the lessons learned in childhood, to which experience has but given new meaning. 4. This gospel was filling the world. "All the world" must be taken with an allowance for rhetorical statement, but the rapid spread of Christianity then, and its power to influence all sorts of men, were facts that needed to be accounted for if the gospel were not true. All schisms and heresies are partial and local, sectarian, and are the product of circumstances; but the gospel goes through the world, and draws all men. Dainties are for the few, and the delicacies of one country are the abominations of another; but everybody breaks bread and lives on it. Do not fling away the gospel, which belongs to all, for that which can never live in the popular heart, nor influence more than a handful of "superior persons." 5. Another plea for adherence to the gospel is based on its continuous and universal fruitfulness. It brings about results which attest its claim to be from God. Our imperfections are our own; our good is its. A medicine is not shown to be powerless if a sick man has taken it irregularly. This rod has budded at all events; have any of its antagonists' rods done the same? Don't cast it away, says Paul, till you have found a better. 6. They have heard a gospel which reveals the "true grace of God"—another argument for steadfastness. In opposition to it then, as now, were put various thoughts and requirements, a human wisdom and a burdensome code. They are but bony things to try and live on. The soul wants something more than bread made out of sawdust. We want a loving God to live on, whom we can love because He loves us. Will anything but the gospel give us that? III. THE APOSTOLIC ENDORSEMENT OF EPAPHRAS, the early teacher of the Colossians, whose authority, no doubt, was imperilled by the new direction of thought, and Paul was desirous of adding the weight of his attestation to the complete correspondence between his own teaching and that of Epaphras. We know nothing of him except from this letter and that to Philemon. He is a member of the Colossian Church (iv. 12). He had brought the tidings which filled the apostle's heart with joy and love for their Christian walk (vers. 4-8), and of anxiety lest they should be swept away from their steadfastness. Epaphras

shared this (iv. 12). He was in some sense Paul's "fellow-prisoner," and alone of Paul's companions receives the name of "fellow-servant," which may be an instance of Paul's courteous humility. "Don't make differences—we are both slaves of one Master." As He had truly represented Paul, so he had lovingly represented them. Probably those who questioned Epaphras' version of Paul's teaching would suspect his report of the Church; hence the double witness borne from the apostle's generous heart to both parts of his brother's work. Never was leader truer to his subordinates than Paul. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Thanksgiving*.—I. THE DUTY. 1. Arises out of an express command. We are bound to be thankful for all things (Job i. 21; Isa. xxiv. 15). 2. Is a test of Christian character. All the saints have been distinguished by it, and have treasured up their mercies that they might render it. To be lacking in it is to lack the chief distinguishing grace of Christian character, and to incur the greatest sin—ingratitude. 3. Must always form a prominent feature of spiritual worship—witness the Psalms. 4. Is most reasonable in itself—when we consider that it is the best return we can make for any blessing. II. ITS SPECIAL SUBJECTS. The graces of the spirit in ourselves or others. 1. Faith takes the precedence, because it is the first and root-grace. Think of what faith does—saves, is the evidence of things unseen, casts all care on God, &c. 2. Love which is fruitful in blessed effects. The loveless man is miserable. 3. A good hope through grace—which anticipates heaven. (*T. Watson, B.A.*) *Apostolic thanksgiving*.—I. ITS SPIRIT. 1. It is unselfish. We hear the prisoner praise and exult for the joys of others. Arthur Helps says: "It is a noble sight. That man is very powerful who has no more hopes for himself, who looks not to be loved or admired any more, to have more honour and dignity; but whose sole thought is for others, and who only lives for them." 2. Ungrudging. He is about to deal with their errors, but is eager first to recognize what is laudable. There are two sets of men, those who first see the blemish, then the beauty; and those who first admire and then criticise. To the first of these Paul belonged. 3. Constant. II. ITS SUBJECTS. 1. The spiritual possessions of the Church. Sometimes Paul views faith and love as leading up to hope: here he depicts hope as kindling faith and love. (1) The faith is Christ-centred. (2) The love is practical. (3) The hope is secure. 2. The means by which these possessions have been obtained. (1) The gospel. (a) In its universality. (b) In its fertility. The gospel is not only vital, but reproductive. (2) The preacher. 3. The source and sphere of their possession. "Love in the Spirit" is the life of all the saints. (*U. R. Thomas.*) The custom of the apostle to begin his Epistles with thanksgiving showed the devout habit of his mind, his constant recognition of the source of good, and his interest in the spiritual condition of those to whom he wrote. I. THANKSGIVING AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN PRAYER. "We give thanks, praying always for you." II. THE BEING TO WHOM ALL THANKSGIVING IS DUE. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." III. THE GROUNDS OF THIS THANKSGIVING. 1. The reputation of their faith in Christ. (1) Christ is the object and foundation of all true faith. He is so as the Divinely-consecrated Deliverer of our race. The grandeur of His work and the glory of His character are suggested by the titles here given. (2) Faith is the root-principle of Christian life. 2. Their possession of an expansive Christian love. Love to Christ is necessarily involved, for love to the saints is our affection for Christ's image in them. Love is all-embracing. Peculiarities, defects, differences of opinion, are no barriers. It is the unanswerable evidence of moral transformation (1 John iii. 14). It is the grandest triumph over the natural enmity of the human heart. It is the indissoluble bond of choicest fellowship. 3. Their enjoyment of a well-sustained hope. (1) Its character. The prospect of heaven—of possessing a spiritual inheritance whose wealth never diminishes and whose splendours never fade—of seeing Christ, and being like Him and dwelling with Him for ever. This prospect lifts the soul above the wearinesses, disappointments, and sufferings of the present limited life. (2) Its security "laid up"—safely deposited as a precious jewel in God's coffer. There no pilfering hands can touch, no breath tarnish, no moth corrupt it. Earthly treasures vanish, and to God's people sometimes nothing but hope remains. Where this treasure is there the heart should be. (3) Its source—the gospel. It alone unfolds the mysteries of the future. How dismal the outlook where hope is unknown. Lessons: 1. We should thank God for others more on account of their spiritual than temporal welfare. 2. Learn what are the essential elements of the Christian character—faith, love, hope. 3. The proclamation of the gospel

should be welcomed, and its message pondered. (*G. Barlow.*) *The connection between thanksgiving and prayer.*—The participle marks the thanksgiving as part of the prayer, and the adverb makes it prominent, indicating that when they prayed for them they always gave thanks. There is no true prayer without thanksgiving. Gratitude intensifies the soul's sense of dependence on God, and prompts the cry for the needed help; and, on the other hand, earnest prayer naturally glides into fervent thankfulness. As one sin is interlinked with and produced by another, so the use of one grace begets another. The more temporal things are used, the more they wear and waste; but spiritual things are strengthened and increased with exercise. Every spiritual grace has in it the seed of an endless reproductiveness. Underlying every thanksgiving for others is a spirit of tender, disinterested love. Moved by this passion, the apostle, from the midst of imprisonment and sorrow, could soar on the wings of gratitude and prayer to heaven. "Thanksgiving will be the bliss of eternity." (*Passavant.*) *Five Christian elements.*—I. CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. It consists in—1. Faith. (1) That which leads us to accept as true the testimony of the gospel concerning Christ. (2) To depend upon Him for all the blessings promised by Him. (3) To constantly apply to Him for all that He has revealed and accomplished. (4) To lay hold of His friendship, and find Him in every respect a faithful, suitable, ever-present, all-sufficient friend. 2. Love, the constant attendant of faith, and by which faith works. (1) It produces universal benevolence to all the world, and compassion for perishing sinners. (2) It especially delights itself in the saints as related to and bearing the image of Him who is the supreme object of love. (3) It will evidence itself in love to Christ's commands, ways, people. 3. Hope. (1) Its object is heaven. (2) As a grace it dwells in the heart, always in some measure accompanying faith and love. (3) It is with the Christian even in his darkest moments. II. CHRISTIAN COMMUNION consists in—1. Joy and gratitude to God on behalf of those who give evidence of being partakers of His grace in truth. This is quite distinct from ordinary friendship. (1) It is founded on personal attractions or intimate intercourse. (2) It is oneness of soul which subsists in the absence of every other consideration, and notwithstanding unfavourable circumstances. 2. Fervent prayer for the establishment and perfection of those graces in the beginning of which we rejoice (vers. 9, 10). 3. Cheering and animating each other to perseverance, notwithstanding all the trials and difficulties we may meet (ver. 11). 4. Encouraging each other constantly to keep in mind our infinite obligations and glorious prospects (vers. 12, 13). III. CHRISTIAN RESOURCES. 1. The word of the truth of the gospel (ver. 5). Till this came the Colossians were strangers to faith, love, and hope. 2. The instrumentality of ministers. Epaphras and Paul were dear fellow-servants and faithful ministers, one preaching to the Colossians, by which they believed, and both labouring for their establishment and edification. 3. Prayer for the supply of all those spiritual blessings which the saints have learned to appreciate and desire (vers. 3-9). 4. The operations of the Holy Spirit, which gives efficiency to all love (ver. 8) is especially said to be in the Spirit, who is indeed the agent of every grace. IV. CHRISTIAN PRACTICE (ver. 6). Wherever the gospel is preached, and attended with Divine power and efficacy, it brings forth fruit. 1. In the conversion of sinners. 2. Where vital religion is possessed it is evidenced by exemplary deportment and diffusive benevolence. There is fruit that both the Church and the world can see. They cannot see our love to Christ or our hope of heaven, but they can see our conscientious dealings in the world, our charity, our unworldliness. These are fruits which give evidence of vitality and vigour in the root. V. CHRISTIAN EXPECTATIONS. Christians have a hope that is laid up for them in heaven. 1. As to themselves, it is secret and out of sight. It is only faith that can realize it. They are yet in their minority in a world of discipline and education; heirs, indeed, but not of age. Supplies are sent them here, but their hope, their portion, is laid up in heaven. 2. It is treasured up in a place of perfect security, so that no enemy or thief can reach it. 3. It is laid up where none of the changes of time can affect it. If we carried it about with us, we might lose it. When we die we should drop it; but it is safe in heaven, out of the reach of disappointment. Conclusion: 1. If we desire spiritual prosperity, let us be much in prayer for ourselves and others. Nothing more enlarges our capacity for holy enjoyment. 2. If we possess a hope in heaven, let it be evidenced by superiority to the world and love to our fellow-heirs. 3. If these blessings are imparted to sinners through the instrumentality of the gospel, be concerned to spread the gospel. (*J. Hirst.*)

Christian love the chief grace :—Love, amid the other graces in this world, is like a cathedral tower, which begins on the earth, and, at first, is surrounded by the other parts of the structure. But, at length, rising above buttressed walls, and arch, and parapet, and pinnacle, it shoots spirelike many a foot right into the air, so high that the huge cross on its summit glows like a spark in the morning light, and shines like a star in the evening sky, when the rest of the pile is enveloped in darkness. So love, here, is surrounded by the other graces, and divides the honours with them; but they will have felt the wrap of night, and of darkness, when it will shine, luminous, against the sky of eternity. (H. W. Beecher.)

VER. 5. *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.*—This is—I. A VERY MARVELLOUS HOPE. 1. If we consider that it is a great act of grace that sinners should have a hope at all, there was a time when we were "without Christ, having no hope." We had many false hopes, little will-o'-the-wisps, which danced before us, deceived us, and led us into the bogs of presumption and error. Each time we tried to rely on good works, outward ceremonies, and good resolutions, we were disappointed anew. Now, sinners though we be, we have a hope. 2. More marvellous still that our hope should be associated with heaven. It seems almost presumptuous for a sinner who so richly deserves hell even to lift up his eyes towards heaven. He might have some hope of purgatory, if there were such a place, but is not the hope of heaven too much? Yet we have no fear of hell or purgatory. Heaven awaits all believers. Not that we shall have a glance at it; we shall have it and be in it. 3. Still more marvellous, it is so substantial. Paul seems hardly to be speaking of the grace of hope, since that dwells in our bosoms, but rather the object, but not exclusively, because that which is laid up in heaven is not a hope, except to those who hope for it. The hope, then, is so substantial that Paul speaks of it as though it were the thing itself. A man may have hope of wealth, but that is a very different thing from being wealthy; and of old age, and yet not reach middle life; but this Divine hope can never be disappointed. 4. Because it is the subject of Divine revelation. No man could have invented it. The prince of dreamers could not have imagined it, nor the master of logic inferred it. The word of the truth of the gospel has opened a window in heaven, and bidden us look on our own. 5. Inasmuch as it came to us by hearing, "Whereof ye heard," not by working, deserving, penance, and sacrifice. We heard that the pierced hand of Jesus had opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and we believed. Will we not prize to the uttermost the sacred word which has brought us such a hope? 6. Because the substance of it is most extraordinary. (1) It is the hope of victory, for we shall overcome every foe; (2) of perfection, for we shall be like Christ; (3) of security from every danger, for no temporal evil shall come near us, no mental evil intrude upon us, no spiritual enemy assail us; (4) of perfect rest, which shall be consistent with continual service, for, like the angels, we shall rest on the wing—no weary limb or fevered brain shall follow us; (5) of happiness beyond compare; (6) of everlasting fellowship with Christ. II. A MOST SECURE HOPE. 1. Because it is laid up. Bank calamities make business men very careful where they lay up their treasures, but there is no room for anxiety for what God takes under His charge. "Laid up," hidden in a safe place. We find it hard to lay up our valuables safely. 2. Laid up "for you." There is a crown in heaven which will never be worn by any other head but yours. 3. Laid up "in heaven," where, as our Saviour says—(1) "Neither moth nor rust doth corrupt"—no process of decay will cause your treasure to become stale and worn out. (2) "Nor do thieves break through and steal." We cannot imagine Satan undermining the bastions of heaven. If your hope lies in the bank, it may break; if in an empire, it may melt away; if in an estate, the deeds may be questioned; if in any human creature, death may bereave you; if in yourself, it is deceitful altogether. 4. We have one indisputable certificate and guarantee for it. Notice three emphatic words. (1) "In the word." We take a good man's words freely; and will we not take God's word much more readily? (2) "Of the truth." It is not a word of guess or probable inference, but of infallible truth. There may be other true things in the world, but God's word is the essence of truth. (3) "Of the gospel." The sum and substance of the good news is this glorious hope. III. A POWERFULLY INFLUENTIAL HOPE. 1. It is the parent and nurse of love. "The love which ye have to all saints for the hope," &c. That is no trifling fountain of action which leads believing hearts to love.

2. Love is part of its operation on ourselves, but it affects others also. (1) It leads ministers and gracious people to give thanks to God; (2) to pray (ver. 9). (C. H. Spurgeon.) *The heavenly hope*:—I. THERE IS GIVEN TO MAN A PROSPECT OF FUTURE GOOD. The apostle here speaks about a hope. Hope is the expectation of future good. There is no being who is not the subject of hope. We are not content to exercise this passion merely in reference to objects which are on this side the grave. We all think of the state into which we expect to remove. Man would fain live for ever; futurity rises on the soul; and hope implants the high desire of enjoying it. This hope is inspired by the goodness of the God who formed us; He has been pleased to grant us a knowledge by which our hopes may be confirmed and conducted to their final goal in heaven. A beautiful vista of enjoyment is opened before us, exactly corresponding with our views and wishes. Hope is the balm of life; and but for it life would be but a dreadful dungeon, and we should sink into all the horrors of despair. Now, look on the future; survey the landscape which revelation has sketched out. There are the many mansions in which God the Father, His Son, His people reside. These are the beautiful similitudes which are employed to inspire our hopes. They are abodes of purity; they are the abodes of knowledge. There we shall know even as we are known. They are abodes of triumph; they are the abodes of blessed companionship. There we come to God, to Jesus, to the spirits of the just made perfect. They are the abodes of life and immortality. II. CERTAIN REQUISITES ARE NECESSARY FOR PARTICIPATING IN THAT PROSPECT. Hope is founded on faith; and we must believe before we can hope for the enjoyment of heaven. 1. There must be faith in the declarations of God by which the nature of these prospects is disclosed. No man can hope for that in which he does not believe. There must be faith, else all this beautiful scenery will only be like the work of fancy or falsehood. 2. Faith in the method of mercy revealed by God as the only way through which a participation in these prospects can be enjoyed. God has not only revealed these prospects, but also the way to the enjoyment of them. III. THE PROSPECT OF FUTURE GOOD RESTS ON THE MOST FIRM AND INVIOLENT SECURITY. It is said to be "laid up." The apostle uses the same expression, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." In Hebrews ix. 27 the same word is rendered "appointed." It is a thing granted on a firm and imperishable security. How different, then, is it from the hopes of earth. Here the object is as certain as if you grasped it in your hand. 1. It rests on the authority of the Word of God. Let it be assumed that the author of your hope is God. Did He ever inspire hope, and plunge into despair? Did He ever erect a building which He will not protect? Has He not power? Is He not wise? Is He destitute of goodness? "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." 2. The word of God is ratified by the work of the Redeemer. All the work of Christ is to give firmness to what God has sworn. "All the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yea, and in Him amen." The death of Christ does its part, as it is the sacrifice by which the curse is taken away. The resurrection of Christ is the testimony that the atonement is accepted. The present residence of the Saviour is another foundation on which this hope rests. "I go to prepare a place for you." "Jesus the forerunner hath entered in." IV. THESE PROSPECTS, WHEN ENJOYED AND POSSESSED, MUST PRODUCE THE MOST POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON THE HEART. 1. It excites to moral purity and holiness of life. You hope to enter heaven. Heaven is a holy place. God is holy. The inhabitants are holy. All their praises centre in this perfection. You must be holy in heaven; and will you not be so here? "Every one that hath this hope purifieth himself as He is pure." 2. It produces calmness and peace amidst the troubles and trials of the world. The man who has so good a hope of heaven need not grudge to encounter a few troubles on earth. 3. It gives confidence amid the approaches of decay and dissolution. This is "the hope which is laid up for Christians in heaven!" "It is a good hope, a lively hope, a sweet hope—a hope which makes the coward bold, a hope which bears above the world," &c. But is it mine? (J. Parsons.) *Hope laid up in heaven*:—What is this hope but the glorious life we look for? Now, where should the life of the branches of a tree be kept but where the root is? So where should our glorious life be hid but where Christ, the root of us all, is with him? Yea, this is most meet and behoveful for us. If an Englishman should sojourn in France a while, and had great treasure to receive, would he not choose rather to have it paid him at the Exchange in his own country than to have it there, far from his home, and stand to the hazard of transporting of

it? So it fareth with us. It is safer that our wealth should be paid us in heaven, our own country, than here where we are but strangers wayfaring for a season. (*P. Bayne, B.D.*) *Christian hope* :—"Our hope is not hung upon such an untwisted thread as 'I imagine so,' or 'It is likely'; but the cable, the strong rope of our fastened anchor, is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal verity; our salvation is fastened with God's own hand, and Christ's own strength, to the strong stake of God's unchangeable nature." (*S. Rutherford.*)

Vers. 5, 6. The word of the truth of the gospel which is come unto you.—*The argument for the gospel based on the triumphs of missions* :—**I. THINK OF THE GOSPEL AS IT AFFORDS INSPIRATION TO DISSEMINATE ITSELF.** Christianity is the religion of universal man. It recognizes no exception. 1. The principles of the kingdom of Jesus Christ are themselves universal. They deal with conditions which belong to all men. They impose rules which all can obey. They grant their privileges without distinction. The sin they would destroy is the sin of all men. The salvation they illustrate is offered to every child of Adam. Christ indicated this universality by explicit declaration in the conversation with Nicodemus, the parables of the kingdom, and the great commission. This idea was fully gained by the apostles. Not at first, although Peter touched it in his address to Cornelius; but Paul fully developed it. Is not this in itself unique? Has it not such a supreme character that it at least suggests the idea of a Divine origin? Why should it belong to Christianity alone? 2. But this universalism is much more than an intellectual idea. It is a vital and energizing force. It propagates itself. The moment a man becomes a Christian he is filled with a desire that others should be Christians. 3. Hence we find two facts in the history of the Church—its aggressive character, and its exclusive relation to all other faiths. The Roman pantheon included all the gods of the nations conquered by Rome, and would have welcomed Christ, but He would not enter it. He demanded the extrusion of every other divinity; His altar alone could receive the sacrifices of a worshipping world. And it is still so. Christianity brooks no other faith. Is not this a noteworthy fact? Whence has it come? 4. It is in modern missions that we may find the practical illustration of this universalism and its most effective illustration. **II. THINK OF THE UNSELFISH SPIRIT IN WHICH THIS ATTEMPT TO WIN A WORLD HAS BEEN PROJECTED AND CARRIED OUT.** 1. The mere desire for imperial sway over an entire race may of itself be no very Divine emotion. Many have experienced it, and it has proved to be a spawn of hell rather than a birth of heaven—Nimrod, Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon. But this is not the spirit that animates the modern herald of the Cross. He seeks no personal glory, his gains are small, his comforts few; with no weapons but a book, the name of Jesus, and a holy life, he moves to the victory of a world. 2. I know all that can be said about the restless spirit, love of adventure, desire to escape the dullness of average home life, and the glamour of missionary fame. But these emotions are fleeting, and perish if there be no recognition in places of note, and wither before old age. But this is not the experience of missionaries. It is nearly a century since evangelical missions were started, but the spirit is as fresh as ever. If the romance has disappeared, it has been replaced by a greater devotion, and a wiser, because more experienced, energy. What is the earthly fame the missionary gains? Mention half a dozen names out of hundreds of thousands which the world signalizes. What his wealth? Scarce a pittance for old age. What does a thoughtful inquirer make of this system which begets such a quality of moral nature, which summons to its work such a noble spirit? Does it not suggest that God must be the author of the truth these men carry forth, and the inspirer of the sentiment with which they do their work? **III. THINK OF THE MARVELLOUS FORCE WHICH THE GOSPEL HAS MANIFESTED IN ITS SPREAD THROUGH THE WORLD.** 1. We are not considering the advance of a nation which is extending its government, arms, commerce, language, or tracing the progress of a trade, science, or any other force which spends itself on our physical existence, and may minister to the baser side of our nature. We are estimating the power of a force which comes to each man personally, and demands thought, obedience, self-conquest, and the dissolution, it may be, of bonds which hold him to his past, his family, and his interest. There is nothing like it. It is the only moral propagander of the world. 2. And yet what victories it has gained. Napoleon confessed that his paled before them. But putting aside the past gains of the gospel, its victories over Jewish faith, Greek philosophy, Roman law, its contest with Islam, and its conquest of Europe, con-

sider its modern achievements. Modern missions found the South Sea Islands the home of naked savages; to-day they are for the most part civilized, and reckoned among the nations. Think of what it has done in Madagascar, and what it is doing in India, China, Japan. Wherever we turn we find the missionary. He has created written languages, clothed the naked, changed the savage into a saint, made lands safe for the trader, freed the slave, &c. IV. THINK OF THE ADAPTATION TO THE WANTS OF MAN WHICH THE GOSPEL HAS EXHIBITED IN ITS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. It has proved itself to be exactly what all men want, and what they could readily accept. 1. How varied are the climes into which it has been carried, but it breathes every air, and finds each as if its native breath. 2. All colours are alike to the gospel. 3. Age makes no difference, and culture renders it neither needless nor ineffectual. 4. No nation outgrows it. 5. It presents a point at which all can unite. It has realized the unity and brotherhood of the race. There is an old Arabic proverb which declares that Islam can flourish only where the palm tree grows, but the Tree of Life is planted in every soil, and blossoms all over the world. What can be the answer of a thoughtful mind to such facts as these? (*Ll. D. Bevan, D.D.*) *The perennial fruitfulness of the gospel*:—The gospel is not like those plants which exhaust themselves in bearing fruit, and wither away. The external growth keeps pace with the reproductive energy. While "beareth fruit" describes the inner working, "increasing" gives the outward extension of the gospel. The words "and increasing" are not found in the received text, but the authority in their favour is overwhelming. (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

Vers. 6-8. Which is come unto you as it is in all the world.—*The true gospel universally the same*:—I. IN ITS ADAPTATION AND ENTERPRISE. "Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world." The gospel, though first proclaimed to the Jews, was not confined to them. It reached and changed the Colossians. In them all races were represented. The world's greatest blessings are not indigenous; are not even sought; they are sent from above. Systems of philosophy lived only in the soil that produced them. Heresies are ethnic; truth is catholic. The success of Mohammedanism was of a different character, and effected by different means. It depended more on the scimitar than the Koran. Alexander, Sesostris, and others achieved similar conquests, and as rapidly, by the force of arms. The victories of the gospel were won by moral weapons. II. IN ITS RESULTS. "Bringeth forth fruit and increaseth as it does also in you." The fruit-bearing denotes its inward and subjective influence on the soul and life; the increasing refers to its outward and diffusive influence as it makes progress in the world. The metaphor used by the apostle suggests that the gospel, as a tree, not only bears fruit, but grows, sending forth its roots more firmly and widely, and extending its branches in the air. We cannot monopolize that which is intended for the world. It is intensely practical, and aims at results corresponding with its character. The individual who is most spiritually fruitful will be most active. III. IN THE MANNER OF ITS RECEPTION. "Since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth." Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. The mode of receiving the gospel is the same to all. It is apprehended by the understanding, approved by the judgment, and embraced by the affections. It is not enough that it falls on the ear like the strain of a seraphic melody, not enough that it enters the understanding as a clearly conceived, full-orbed truth, not enough that it ripples through the sphere of the emotions as an unspeakable ecstasy; unless, aided by the Divine Spirit, it be cordially embraced by the heart and conscience as the whole truth—the only truth that saves. It is in the gospel only that we "hear of the grace of God"—the good news that He has provided redemption and restoration for the race. Nature, with all its revelations, is dumb on this subject. Providence, with its vast repertory of mingled mystery and bounty, unfolds it not. It is only by believing the gospel that, like the Colossians, we can "know the grace of God in truth." IV. IN THE METHOD OF ITS PROPAGATION. 1. It is propagated by preaching "as ye also learned," lit., "as ye were instructed," in the truth of the previous verse. Probably Epaphras first preached the gospel at Colosse and the neighbouring cities. Preaching is the Divinely-instituted means of disseminating the gospel. It cannot be superseded by any other agency. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save." 2. It is propagated by men thoroughly qualified for the work. (1) The apostle recognized Epaphras as a co-labourer with himself. The

preacher must labour as belonging to Christ, as dependent on Him, and as attached to Him. With all frankness, affection, and modesty, the great apostle acknowledges Epaphras as "a dear fellow-labourer." Envy and jealousy of the gifts and reputation of others are pernicious and unjustifiable. (2) The apostle recognized Epaphras as a faithful minister of Christ. (3) The apostle recognized Epaphras as a man of deep spiritual insight. "Who also declared unto us your love in the spirit." Love is the leading characteristic of the gospel. Lessons: 1. The universality of the gospel a strong evidence of the Divine authorship. 2. Though all the world were to reject the gospel it would still be true. 3. To whomsoever the gospel comes, the imperative duty is to believe it. (*George Barlow.*) *The gospel, its spread and fruitfulness*.—I. THE ADMIRABLE PROGRESS AND GREAT AND SUDDEN SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL. 1. The gospel had come to the Colossians, a people living in Phrygia, a province infamous for its abominations, whence had issued the mysteries and infernal devotions of Cybele, the most detestable of pagan idols, and in whose service were committed the most shameful horrors. Whence it appears that the knowledge of God's Word is a donation of mere grace, and not the payment of merit. The apostle tells them, not that they had come to the gospel, but it to them; to show us that it is God who comes to us, who prevents us by His grace, according to His good pleasure. The sick go to the physician; here the Physician of souls goes to the sick (Luke xix. 10; Isa. lxx. 1). 2. The gospel was come into all the world. This is not at all astonishing if the other apostles and evangelists laboured each according to his measure. We read of the extraordinary diffusion of the gospel in Justin, Clement, Tertullian, and even Tacitus acknowledges that there was a very great multitude of Christians in Rome. 3. The apostle mentions this—(1) To confirm them the more in the faith of the gospel. Not that truth depends on its success; though all the world were against it that would be unshaken. Yet it is a consolation to the believer to see the extensive diffusion of his faith; and the more converts, the greater the confirmation. (a) It was not full thirty years since the crucifixion; how, then, could the doctrine of the Cross have made so great a way in so little time, surmounted so many obstacles, flown into so many places, if it were not Divine. What other system has accomplished so much. (b) Then it had no force of arms to advance it, or charms of eloquence and philosophy to commend it. Its missionaries were fishermen and artisans, without credit or experience, persecuted, derided, killed. Yet it spread everywhere. (2) Besides the confirmation of their faith the apostle designed to fortify them against the errors which were being sown in the Church. II. ITS DIVINE EFFICACY. 1. It brings forth fruit—faith, love, &c. It is this energy of the gospel which Christ represents in Matt. xiii. Wherever the gospel went it transformed (Isa. xli. 19, lv. 10, 11), and those whom it transformed used it to transform others. (1) It brought forth fruit instantly—not as nature. The moment the gospel is rightly received it produces fruit. Receive it then at once (Psa. xc. 7, 8). One of the most pernicious artifices of the enemy is to induce men to defer conversion. You cannot be the Lord's too soon. (2) But if we are required to bear fruit at once, it follows not that we may soon after cease to do so, as certain trees which, if they are the first to flourish are the first to fade (Psa. xcii. 14). 2. The faith of the gospel is "the knowledge of the grace of God," because it is not possible to enjoy this heavenly doctrine if the man has not received the mercy it offers in Jesus Christ. This grace is the heart and substance of the gospel. When Paul says that they "heard and knew the grace of God in truth," he means either—(1) That they received it in sincerity, without hypocrisy; or (2) That it was delivered to them pure, and without mixture of Pharisaical superstition or philosophical vanity; or (3) So as it is declared in the gospel, not on error and fictions, as in the false religions; nor in shadow or figure as in the law, but nakedly and simply as it is in itself. Of these three expositions the first is commendatory of the Colossians, the second of Epaphras, the third of the gospel itself. (*J. Daillé.*) *The progress of Christianity*.—The following statement, a conjectural but probable representation of the progressive increase of Christians in the world, is attributed to Sharon Turner: 1st century, 500,000; 2nd, 2,000,000; 3rd, 5,000,000; 4th, 10,000,000; 5th, 15,000,000; 6th, 20,000,000; 7th, 24,000,000; 8th, 30,000,000; 9th, 40,000,000; 10th, 50,000,000; 11th, 70,000,000; 12th, 80,000,000; 13th, 75,000,000; 14th, 80,000,000; 15th, 100,000,000; 16th, 125,000,000; 17th, 155,000,000; 18th, 200,000,000. Although this is only a mere approximation, and a very loose one, to the actual facts, yet it is interesting and instructive. With the exception of the thirteenth century (*tenebrosus*, as the late Dr Miller called it),

the progress of the truth has been ever onward. From every defeat it has arisen afresh, and what has never been the case in any other system, religious, social, or intellectual, has revived anew from the ashes of its own inward corruptions. In this nineteenth century, the Christian population of the world cannot be far from three hundred millions; and its progress now is more rapid than in any period since the apostolic age. What imagination can forecast the conquests of the next fifty years! The heaven is working in every land. The old empires of idolatry and superstition are effete, and ready to vanish; while new Christian empires are born almost in a day. Every new discovery in nature, or invention in art, helps to speed the gospel. Trade, commerce, revolution, exploration, all prepare the way and herald the approach of the heralds of the cross. (Dr. Haven.)

Ver 7. As ye also learned of Epaphras.—*Epaphras*:—To commend Epaphras to the Colossians and secure to him their heart, Paul bears a strong testimony to his fidelity and goodness. 1. Paul knew how very important it is that churches should have a good opinion of their pastors; and with what artifices the enemy labours to ruin their reputation among their flocks; on this account he here exalts Epaphras as his piety deserved; and, to remove from the Colossians all suspicion against the purity of his teachings, expressly assures them that the doctrine which they had learned of him was the same gospel of which he had spoken. 2. And from this anxiety of the apostle ministers should learn the necessity of insuring the esteem of their people; abstaining not from evil only, but also from its appearances. It is not enough to obtain the approval of our own conscience, we should also be prepared to satisfy the judgment of our neighbours. Innocence is necessary for ourselves, and reputation for others. 3. And since it serves to edify them, we are evidently bound to preserve, not only our own, but also the reputation of our brethren. Who does not see that if we bite and rend one another, the disgraceful conduct of individuals will involve us all in one common infamy and ruin? 4. And see also that as the reputation of pastors is a public good, each believer owes it a peculiar respect, and that the crime of those who unjustly violate it is a kind of sacrilege. It is robbing the Church, stealing from it its means of edification. To return to Epaphras; the apostle calls him—I. His “DEAR FELLOW-SERVANT.” Admire—1. His ingenuousness; for whereas there is commonly a jealousy between persons of the same profession, St. Paul acknowledges and exalts the gifts and piety of this servant of God. 2. His kindness; for he loves him, and shows that of all men there were none whom he more tenderly esteemed than the faithful ministers of the gospel. 3. His humility; in that being raised to the throne of apostolic dignity, the highest in the Church, he makes Epaphras, as it were, to sit there with him, owning him for his fellow. II. A “MINISTER OF CHRIST.” It was much to be fellow-servant with St. Paul, but it is much more to be the minister of Christ, the Head of the Church. III. A “FAITHFUL MINISTER:” the appellation of minister was his in common with many others, the praise of faithfulness with few. It is all that the apostle required in a good steward of the house of God (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2). To have this praise the minister of God must—1. Seek the glory of his Master, and not his own. 2. He must keep close to his orders; not parsimoniously concealing from his sheep any of the things committed to him for their edification; and without setting before them anything of his own invention beyond, or contrary to, the will of the chief Shepherd. IV. A FAITHFUL MINISTER OF CHRIST FOR YOU. They ought therefore to love him both for the dignity of his office, and for the profit that thereby came to them. For though we are bound to love and respect all the faithful servants of God in general, yet, doubtless, we owe them particular affection and reverence who specially consecrate their ministry to our edification. (J. Daillé.) *The praise of service*:—It is a beautiful though a faint image which shines out on us from these fragmentary notices of this Colossian Epaphras—a true Christian bishop, who had come all the long way from his quiet valley in the depths of Asia Minor to get guidance about his flock from the great apostle, and who bore them on his heart day and night, and prayed much for them while so far away from them. How strange the fortune which has made his name and his solicitudes and prayers immortal! How little he dreamed that such embalming was to be given to his little services, and that they were to be crowned with such exuberant praise! The smallest work done for Jesus Christ lasts for ever, whether it abide in men’s memories or no. Let us ever live as those who, like painters in fresco, have with swift hand to draw lines and lay on colours which will never fade; and let us by humble faith and holy life earn such a character from Paul’s Master. The Master’s

"well done" will out-weigh labours and toils, and the depreciating tongues of fellow-servants, or of the Master's enemies. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *A faithful minister of Christ*:—I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAITHFUL MINISTER OF CHRIST. 1. A sincere and manifest attachment to our Lord and Saviour. 2. He receives his doctrines and his views of truth from the pure fountain of Divine revelation. Moses was ordered to make all things according to the pattern shown him on the mount; and every faithful minister of Christ is extremely cautious that everything he delivers corresponds with the rule laid down by his Master. He makes the Scriptures his guide—the Holy Word of God his instructor. 3. While he knows the truth, he without reserve honestly delivers the Lord's message. Jeremiah was commanded by God to deliver all the message which the Lord gave him, and not to be afraid of man. He will not hesitate to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and will be equally faithful in comforting and strengthening believers—in showing to them their privileges, and the great mercy bestowed upon them through their covenant-head. 4. While he preaches a whole gospel, giving to saints and sinners their portion in due season, he is willing, and does suffer, if need be, for righteousness' sake. 5. Perseverance to the end: "Be thou faithful," &c. II. SUCH A MINISTER IS A GREAT BLESSING TO THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HE IS SENT BY GOD. 1. Because he leads them from the greatest of misery to the greatest of blessedness. (1) He conducts them from sin, impenitence, self-righteousness, and unbelief; and the man who does this is our true friend. (2) He leads us to the enjoyment of the most distinguished favours, into green pastures—a state of favour with God, of union with Jesus Christ, of holy communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, upon earth, and a state of happiness when we die, enabling us to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 2. Inasmuch as he brings to their knowledge those holy and exalted truths that fortify a man for the sufferings of time and the hour of death. 3. Inasmuch as by opening to them the gospel, he presents them with—what?—ah! with what philosophy cannot do—with what the reason of man cannot unfold—with what science can never explore—with what all the pride of learning can never bring to light:—he brings life and immortality to their view. III. GOD WILL PUT HONOUR ON A FAITHFUL MINISTRY. 1. By the witness of the Spirit in the minister's own soul. 2. Where the gospel is fully preached God is generally pleased to add the seal of His approbation to it by means of the talents of His minister. 3. The Lord puts honour on His faithful ministers, both in the Church and in the world. 4. The faithful minister of God will be honoured at the day of judgment, when his Master shall say to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant," etc., not Well done, learned, zealous, eloquent, successful servant. Conclusion.—1. A faithful minister of Jesus Christ is the gift of God. 2. When a faithful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ dies he goes to give in His account. 3. If the faithful minister goes at death to give an account to his Lord and Master, then the congregation he leaves behind ought to reflect and think what account he will give of them. (*R. McAll, D.D.*) *Ministerial responsibility*:—I am angry when I hear people talk about the "awful responsibility" of being a minister. People sometimes say to me, "I should think you would shudder when you stand up before your congregation." I shudder? what should I shudder for? Do you shudder when you stand up before a garden of flowers? Do you shudder when you go into an orchard of fruit in October? Do you shudder when you stand up in the midst of all the richness and grandeur of nature? I shudder in your midst? "But the responsibility!" I have no responsibility. I am willing to do my duty; and what more is there than that? I will not stand for the consequences. I will do the best I can. I will say the best things I can every Sunday; I will bring the truth home to you, and I will do it in the spirit of love. Even when I say the severest things, it is because I am faithful to love. "But your care!" I have not a bit of care. I forget the sermon a great deal quicker than you do. "Your burden!" I have no burden. I take up the battle, and I lay the battle aside again as soon as it is over. And I shall sleep to-night as sweetly as any man that is here. And every man that is in the ministry, and is willing to love men, and to be faithful to them, will find joy in it from day to day. (*H. W. Beecher*). *Ministers must be faithful*:—A dying nobleman once sent for the clergyman on whose ministry he had attended, and said to him, "Do you not know that my life has been licentious, and that I have violated the commandments of God? Yet you never warned me of my danger!" The clergyman was silent. When the nobleman repeated the question, he replied, "Yes, my lord, your manner of living was not unknown to me; but your kindness, and my fear of

slandering you, deterred me from reproving you." "How cruel! how wicked!" said the dying man. "The provision I made for you and your family ought to have induced care and fidelity. You have neglected to warn and instruct me, and now my soul will be lost." *A picture of a faithful minister*:—Come in; I will show thee that which may be profitable to thee. So he commanded his man to light the candle, and bid Christian follow him; so he had him into a private room, and bid his man open a door, the which when he had done, Christian saw the picture of a very grave person hung up against the wall, and this was the fashion of it:—It had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written upon its lips, the world was behind his back, it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over his head. Then said Christian, What means this? Interpreter: The man whose picture this is, is one of a thousand; he can beget children (1 Cor. iv. 5), travail in birth with children (Gal. iv. 19), and nurse them himself when they are born (1 Thess. ii. 7). And, whereas thou seest him with his eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, and the law of truth writ on his lips, it is to show thee that his work is to know and unfold dark things to sinners, even as also thou seest him stand as if he pleaded with men; and whereas thou seest the world as cast behind him, and that a crown hangs over his head, that is to show thee that slighting and despising the things that are present, for the love that he hath to his Master's service, he is sure in the world that comes next to have glory for his reward. (*Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."*)

Ver. 8. Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.—The apostle rejoiced over the fact that the Colossians lived. This affirmation is to be proved. I. THERE ARE VARIOUS KINDS OF LIFE—of the plant, animal, man. Man has several lives, that of the animal, since he has a body; that of the intellect, since he thinks; that of the heart, since he loves. It will not be contested that thought is the life of the intellect, for the one separated from the other is nothing: and so with the life of the heart—love. Some will say that it hates also. So it does, for we cannot love a thing without hating its opposite. But the life of the heart is not to hate and to love, because hatred is not the true object of the heart. It is impossible to produce fire without making ashes, but to make ashes is not the end of our labours. Hatred forms the ashes of the fire which love kindles, but it is not on those ashes that the heart lives. The hatred which springs not from love is not the life but the death of the heart; as error is not the life of reason. But the heart has another death which is egotism; which, however, involves hatred, for a man cannot love himself exclusively without hating others. II. THE LIFE OF THE HEART IS SUPREME. 1. The life of the plant is inferior to that of the animal, that of the animal inferior to that of man, that of the body beneath that of the intellect, that of the intellect beneath moral life. Matter and form are far inferior to knowledge, and knowledge cannot be put on a level with love. 2. Then that which constitutes the value of each of these lives is its relation to a superior life. Matter is of value as it does service to the intellect, and the intellect is degraded when it does not terminate in love. If therefore a man wants the principal life for which he has received all others, and does not love, he is dead. 3. The gospel uniformly gives supremacy to this life of the heart or love. III. THE LOVE OF WHICH THE APOSTLE SPEAKS IS LOVE IN THE SPIRIT. What is this spirit? spirit in opposition to matter? and is the expression equivalent to spiritual love? Rather Paul means love in the Spirit of God, love which He teaches and inspires. But this does not exclude the former. For our spirit is the better part of us which the Spirit of God has come to set at liberty, that part of our being which holds communion with God. This love, then, is—1. According to the Holy Spirit. 2. A spiritual love towards the true, just, divine, immortal. 3. And so not (1) carnal affection, which is death (Rom. viii. 6); (2) interested affection; (3) mere natural affection; although these are consecrated and renovated by the Spirit, after which the creature is loved in and for God. IV. THE OBJECT OF THIS LOVE. God supremely and then others, forming one grand unity (John xvii. 23). V. THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF THIS LOVE IS CHRIST. In Him we know what love is, but it was manifested in Him that it might be diffused. His disciples are to reflect His love. VI. THIS LOVE BEING LIFE, AND ANIMATED BY THE SPIRIT OF LIFE, IS IMMORTAL. VII. HELL IS THE ABSENCE OF THIS LOVE. It is that empty heart which has been violently dis severed from its affections without being united to God, a heart which has need of love, and which finds no object to supply this want. (*A. Vinet, D.D.*) *Two reasons for love in the Spirit*:—The first, a general one, which regards the very nature of love: to wit,

because the Holy Spirit is the author of it; and also because love flows from a spiritual heart, *i.e.*, from a heart regenerated and renewed. Hence observe the dignity of Christian love. For natural love, or predilection, arises from those inclinations which they call natural affections. Worldly love arises either from views of interest or from conformity of manners; carnal, from the appetite for pleasure. To all these something corrupt, sordid, and vicious always adheres. But Christian love arises from the Holy Spirit, and is altogether full of holiness and purity. The other reason why the love of the Colossians is said to be in the spirit is *special*, and hath respect to Paul himself; for, they had never seen Paul, but had only heard of him through Epaphras and others. Because, therefore, they had loved him whom they never saw in the flesh, they are said to love in the spirit. Therefore the word spirit is taken in the same sense as in 1 Cor. v. 3. Hence observe, that the duty of every good man is, to embrace with spiritual love all good men, although known only by report. That any one may be esteemed worthy of our love, it is sufficient if he be known in respect to his virtue, although he be unknown in person. (*Bishop Davenant.*)

Vers. 9-14. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you.—*The knowledge of the Divine will*:—The petition asks—I. FOR A BESTOWMENT OF A KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIVINE WILL AS ATTAINED BY A SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING AND WISDOM. The faith and charity of the Colossians had been so reported to the apostle as to fill his heart with thankfulness, which took its habitual course, that of unceasing prayer. Blending the subject of his prayer with his purpose in offering it, St. Paul asks—1. Generally that they may be filled, &c.—three terms which in their union signify an impartation from above of a thorough insight into the will of God as directing the practical life. Based on the eternal purpose of redemption, this will is the counsel of human sanctification. As a matter of request it is the Holy Spirit's operation on our faculties making the knowledge experimental, rewriting the moral law on the heart, and making it there supreme. 2. Particularly the apostle connects with this the spiritual wisdom and understanding which bring Divine knowledge into the sphere of the human faculties. The Holy Spirit imparts it to the "understanding" which makes it the object of study, and aggregates the whole into wisdom, which is the practical application to life of the precepts which the understanding embraces. But both are spiritual. The unregenerate understanding may make the moral law an object of study, and arrange the whole into a system of rules for the wisdom of human ethics. But in the regenerate the precepts are studied in the light of the new nature, and the whole wisdom of holiness is the result of a teaching that is "from above" (James i. 17). II. FOR PRACTICAL CONFORMITY WITH THAT WILL IN—1. Fruitfulness (1) in every good work. All the manifestations of godliness are the fruit of a Divine life within wrought by Christ indwelling by His Spirit. But the phrase "every good work" teaches us that the thoughts, words, and deeds of holiness are our own. In their secret source they have a heavenly origin, in their manifestation they are human. The wonderful completeness arrests attention. The tree brings forth all the fruits that the infinite diversity of the relations of life permit. (2) The words "increasing in the knowledge of God" suggests that Christian fruitfulness knows no limitation. As the knowledge of God and His will grows, the fruits of obedience grow likewise, and with growing sanctity the notion of the Divine Being becomes more clear. But the general spirit of the prayer recommends the former, *viz.*, that the enlarging knowledge of God's will, as "proved" in its varying applications in daily life, leads to an unlimited increase in good works. To the Christian the interior law of God unfolds perpetually new obligations; and as it does this, the obedient life puts on new aspects of perfection. (3) We now go back to the glowing words which precede "That ye might walk," &c. Here is a twofold standard. (a) Such a walk as should do honour to God. (b) Such an aim to secure His approval as should win His complacency always and in all things. There is a daring completeness in this sentence. There is no reservation for human infirmity, no undertone of deprecation of the Divine severity, no hint of a tolerant construction of our conduct. 2. Endurance presented as a passive patience combined with an active longsuffering. (1) While the Divine knowledge is the instrument or energy of the holy life, it is the Divine power which is connected with the patience of that holiness. The strength of God of course accomplishes all; but that strength is "made perfect in weakness." The interior discipline of religion is both endurance of what is imposed, and resistance of all temptation to rebel. Thus

the grandeur of the Christian conflict is that the omnipotence of God is brought down into the secret arena of the struggle. He infuses every kind of strength—strength to bear the inflictions of the Divine will in the sorrows of life, its disappointments, the oppositions of evil, the inexhaustible varieties of the pressure of the one great cross; strength to resist temptations from without, in the assaults of Satan, the waywardness of men, persecution, &c. (2) If this be the case, surely the believer should “count it all joy” to be undergoing temptation and that only in the feeling of victory. The very conflict itself is joyous, if Divine and human strength unite; the spirit feels most here what it is to be one with Christ. 3. Thanksgiving enters into all the other elements of the Christian life, and is not merely their supplement. It is here made to spring solely from the sense of redemption. But since the perfecting of the redemptional scheme all the benedictions of providence become redemptional. To pass from the kingdom of darkness into that of God’s dear Son is not to leave the kingdoms of nature and providence, but to add to them, as he shows further on, all the glory of the inheritance of the saints in light. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *The apostolic prayer*:—Chrysostom said to those who would realize the classical allusion more vividly than we do, “that as in the games we urge on those who are near victory, so Paul here prays for an increase of Christian attainment for the Church that had already attained so much.” Hence he says, “For this cause.” We should rightly consider this prayer for such increase:—(1) Because it teaches us what we should seek in our intercession for Churches. Our standard of Church prosperity is convicted by such a prayer; our right plans for Church increase are here inspired. (2) Because it teaches us what we are to seek and expect for ourselves: what is really worth aiming, struggling, praying for. Paul prays—**I. THAT THEIR KNOWLEDGE MAY INCREASE**—doubtless partly because of the error that was confusing some, but also because knowledge is always good. Three expressions describe it that are frequently used in combination in Scripture, and which Aristotle denotes as intellectual virtues. 1. Knowledge. This is descriptive of acquaintance with any subject. He has it who has information. It is essential as the basis of culture, but is only the basis. 2. Wisdom is higher than knowledge, and includes both that and understanding. Newman well calls it “Reason exercised upon knowledge.” 3. Spiritual understanding the application of knowledge to practical detail, the following out of its processes to daily duty and to the spiritual realm. **II. THAT AS A RESULT OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE THEIR CHARACTER MAY RIPEN.** The knowledge of God’s will must result in action, or it is valueless. The character resulting from this knowledge includes—1. Walking worthy of the Lord. The Christian life is an activity, a progress tested by the highest standard. 2. Increasing in the knowledge of God. So knowledge increases. This time it is more than knowledge of God’s will, it is knowledge of God’s self. Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge. 3. Being strengthened with all might. Energy, inner energy, inner energy of the highest sort for endurance. 4. Giving thanks to the Father. Life shall have music in it—the highest music of praise. For what? (1) Fitness for blessedness, “meet for inheritance.” An inheritance is allotted to those who are ready for it. (2) Emancipation from the power of darkness—rescue from the tyranny of confusion, ignorance, peril, evil. (3) Settlement in an empire of liberty, order and honour. (4) And through and above all for Christ as the means to blessing, and Himself the chiefest blessing. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The power of unceasing prayer*:—“If I was ever brought into the kingdom of God,” said a venerable Christian lady, “it was owing to the intercessions of old Dr. L. He married me, and he used often to call and speak a few earnest words to me about my soul. ‘You are now a wife and a mother,’ he would say; ‘do not delay to give yourself to the Lord, and to pray for grace to fulfil your duties. I shall never cease to plead for you.’” The thought that a man of God was pleading for her before God, as well as pleading with her at the bar of her own conscience, was the point which seems to have made the impression. *Sanctified knowledge*:—Sanctified knowledge is the Holy Spirit’s greatest helper. “It carries the torch before faith; it opens the door of eternity to hope; it presents love with a perfectly beautiful object; it furnishes joy with its sweetest melodies; it supplies patience with the strongest motives, and resignation with the noblest patterns.” (*S. Charnock.*) *Spiritual knowledge*:—The difference between believers and unbelievers is not so much in the extent, as in the manner of their knowledge. An unbeliever may know more, and be able to talk more of Divine things than many believers, but he knows nothing spiritually and savingly, with a holy, heavenly light. A believer may comprehend less, but he apprehends more.

(G. S. Bowes.) *The best knowledge*:—Many there are that are accounted deep scholars, great linguists, excellent mathematicians, sharp logicians, knowing politicians, fine rhetoricians, sweet musicians, &c. These may be good or bad, as the case may be, but he is certainly the best grammarian that has learnt to speak the truth from his heart; the best astronomer that hath his conversation in heaven; the best musician that hath learned to sing the praises of his God; the best arithmetician, that so numbereth his days as to apply himself to wisdom; he is knowing in ethics, that traineth up his family in the fear of the Lord; he is the best economist who is wise to salvation, prudent in giving and taking good counsel; he is the best politician, and he is a good linguist that speaks the language of Canaan. (J. Spencer.)

Vers. 9-12. To pray for you and desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge. *The prayer*.—I. THE FOUNTAIN OR ROOT OF ALL CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. "That ye might be filled . . . understanding." 1. The thing desired is the perfecting of the Colossians in religious knowledge. (1) The idea of completeness up to the height of their capacity is given in "filled"; like some jar charged with sparkling water up to the brim. (2) The advanced degree of the knowledge is given in a favourite word which signifies mature knowledge, deeper apprehension of God's truth. (3) The rich variety of that knowledge is set forth in the clauses which may read "filled . . . so that ye may abound in . . . wisdom and understanding," or with "the knowledge of His will," *i.e.*, manifested in that will. That knowledge will blossom out into every kind of wisdom and understanding. 2. The principles which these words involve. (1) That the foundation of Christian character and conduct is laid in the knowledge of the will of God. What concerns us to know is not abstract truth, or revelation or speculative thought, but God's will. No revelation has accomplished its purpose when a man has simply understood it. The light is knowledge which is meant to shape practice. Had this been remembered two opposite errors would have been avoided. (a) The error threatening the Colossians, that Christianity was merely a system of truth to be believed. An unpractical heterodoxy was their danger, an unpractical orthodoxy is ours. The one important question is, does our Christianity work? (b) The converse error to that of unpractical knowledge, that of unintelligent practice, is quite as bad. A numerous class profess to attach no importance to Christian doctrine, but put all the stress on Christian morals. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Knowledge is sound when it moulds conduct; action is good when based on knowledge. (2) Progress in knowledge is the law of the Christian life. There should be continual advancement in the apprehension of God's will from the first glimpse which saves to this mature knowledge. The progress does not consist in leaving behind old truths, but in the profounder conception of what is contained in them. The same constellations which burn in our midnight sky looked down on Chaldean astronomers, but how much more is known about them at Greenwich than was dreamed at Babylon. II. THE RIVER OR STEMS OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT. 1. Worthily of the Lord. There are other forms of the same expression (Eph. iv. 1.; Rom. xvi. 2; Phil. i. 27; 1 Thess. ii. 12), in all of which there is the idea of a standard to which the practical life is to be conformed. (1) The Christian should "walk" in a manner corresponding to what Christ has done for him. We say that we are not our own, but bought with a price. Then how do we repay that costly purchase. Nothing short of complete self-surrender can characterize the walk that corresponds with our obligations to Christ. Repugnant duties then become tokens of love, pleasant as every sacrifice made at its bidding ever is. (2) The Christian should act in a manner corresponding to Christ's character and conduct. Nothing less than the effort to tread in His footsteps is a walk worthy of the Lord. All unlikeness to His pattern is a dishonour to Him and to ourselves. 2. "Unto all pleasing," which sets forth the great aim as being to please Christ in everything, and satisfy Him by our conduct. We are not to mind other people's approbation. We can do without that. What does it matter who praise, if He frowns? or who blame if He smiles. Nothing will so spur us to diligence, and make all life solemn and grand as the thought that "we labour that . . . we may be well pleasing to Him." Nothing will so string the muscles for the fight, and free us from entanglements as the ambition to "please Him who hath called us to be soldiers." Men have willingly flung away their lives for a couple of lines of praise in a dispatch. Let us try to live and die so as to get "honourable mention" from our Captain. III. THE FOURFOLD STREAMS OR BRANCHES INTO WHICH THIS GENERAL CONCEPTION OF

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER PARTS ITSELF. 1. "Bearing fruit in every good work."

(1) Here the man in whom the word (ver. 6) is planted is regarded as the producer of fruit. The worthy walk will be first manifested in the production of a rich variety of forms of goodness. The only true fruit is goodness; all else is leaves. Much of our work and its results is no more fruit than galls on oak leaves.

(2) The Christian life is to be "fruitful in every good work." We should seek to fill the whole circuit of the year with various holiness, and to make widely different forms of goodness our own. Let us aim at this all round multiform virtue, and not be like a scene for a stage, all gay and bright on one side, and dirty canvas and stretchers hung with cobwebs on the other. 2. "Increasing in the knowledge of God." The figure of the tree is probably continued here. If it fruits, its girth will increase, its branches spread, its top mount, and next year its shadow will cover a larger circle. Fruitfulness in good works leads to increased knowledge, and all true knowledge tends to influence action. Obedience gives insight. "If any man will do His will, he shall know," &c. Moral truth becomes dim to a bad man. Religious truth grows bright to a good one. 3. "Strengthened . . . joyfulness."

Knowing and doing are not the whole of life; there are sorrow and suffering too. (1) Here again we have Paul's favourite "all." Every kind of strength that God can give and man receive is to be sought after. And that Divine power is to flow into us, having this for its measure and limit—"the might of His glory." His "glory" is the lustrous light of his self-revelation; and the far-flashing energy revealed in that is the immeasurable measure of the strength that may be ours.

(2) And what exalted mission is destined for this? Nothing that the world thinks great—(a) patience, including the idea of perseverance in the right course and uncomplaining bearing of evil as sent by God; (b) long-suffering, the temper under suffering considered as a wrong and injury done by man. (c) With joy—flowers beneath the snow, songs in the night. 4. Giving thanks unto the Father. This is the summit of all, and is to be diffused through all. Thankfulness should mingle with all our thoughts and feelings, like the fragrance of some perfume penetrating the scentless air. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *A comprehensive apostolic prayer:*—It was—I. EXPRESSIVE OF DEEP SPIRITUAL INTEREST. 1. Suggested by the report of active Christian virtues. "For this cause," They had believed in Christ, loved the brethren, hoped for the future, borne fruit. All this excites Paul's grateful heart to pray for higher blessings for them. We best show our love for others by prayer. That is always needed since Christian vows are imperfect and may decay or be abused. 2. Constant and fervent. "Do not cease." Paul had undoubted faith in the efficacy of prayer. II. FOR AMPLEST KNOWLEDGE. 1. The main subject of this knowledge. Man thirsts for knowledge, but the highest is the knowledge of God; not simply of His nature, but His will. 2. The measure in which the knowledge may be possessed. The word indicates a living, complete knowledge of the Divine will. There is no limit to our increase in Divine knowledge but our own capacity, diligence, and faith. 3. The practical form in which the knowledge should be exercised. "In all wisdom and spiritual understanding." The word spiritual applies to both wisdom and understanding. The false teachers offered a wisdom which had only a show of it; an empty counterfeit calling itself philosophy. The wisdom and understanding the gospel imparts are the work of the Holy Spirit. No amount of mental or moral culture can supply it. This was the power lacked by the Galatians, and to save the Colossians from their fate Paul prays that they may discern between the true and the false, the carnal and the spiritual. III. FOR THE LOFTIEST CHRISTIAN CAREER. Observe—1. The high standard of Christian conduct. For this purpose we are filled with the knowledge of His will. The end of knowledge is practice. 2. The rule by which that standard is maintained. We are not to please ourselves or others as an ultimate object. If our conduct does please parents, friends, country as well as God, it is well; but though all others are displeased we must please Him. This is the simplest as well as the grandest rule of life, and will settle many perplexing questions of human duty. 3. The productiveness of Christian consistency. It is not enough to bear one kind of fruit; there must be fertility in "every" good work. The Christian is in sympathy with and will promote every enterprise that aims at the physical, social, or moral welfare of man. 4. Progress in Divine knowledge. We can recall no stage in which additional knowledge is unnecessary. Activity in goodness sharpens the knowing faculty and adds to the stores of wisdom, and increased knowledge stimulates the worker (John vii. 17; Matt. xxv. 29). IV. FOR SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH. 1. The appropriateness and fulness of the blessing desired. Man is morally weak by sin.

Christ introduced another force which counteracts sin and will overthrow it. All who believe in Him have this force and it is necessary to realize the blessings for which Paul prays. Our enemies are numerous and our infirmities are many. We need, therefore, every kind of strength to endure onslaught or solicitation. 2. Its supernatural source, "might of His glory." Moral power is not native to the Christian. Power is an attribute of God's glory, and is manifested in the splendid works of creation. 3. Its great practical purpose. Patience is the temper which does not easily succumb under trial: long-suffering, or long-mindedness, is the self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong. Patience respects the weight of the affliction: long-suffering its duration. The former is exercised in our relation to God, the latter in our relation to man. The true strength of the believer consists, not so much in what he can do, as in what he can endure (Isa. xxx. 15). The characteristic of both patience and long-suffering is "Joyfulness." To suffer with joyfulness is the great distinction and triumph of the Christian spirit. The endurance of the stoic was often the effect of pride or insensibility. Learn: 1. How sublime are the topics of genuine prayer. 2. Deep experimental acquaintance with the things of God is essential to a lofty and useful career. 3. Knowledge, wisdom, spiritual fertility and strength are the gifts of God. (*G. Barlow.*)

A worthy walk:—I. ITS SOURCES. The whole ground of this prayer is found in "who hath made us meet," "who delivered us out of the power of darkness." 1. The gift of Divine sonship. 2. An increase in the knowledge of God's will. We must know what God's will is before we can walk worthily, &c. His will is revealed in His Word. 3. The impartation of wisdom and spiritual understanding. 4. The bestowment of Divine strength. Sonship does not stand alone. II. ITS FRUITS. 1. Good works. 2. Patient endurance of tribulations as well as perseverance through and in spite of them. 3. Long-suffering towards personal foes and the enemies of the truth. III. ITS END. A worthy walk begins in sonship, proceeds to sanctification, and ends in glory. (*Family Churchman.*)

Paul's desire for the Colossians:—The Colossians were distinguished for love, and for that "cause" the apostle shows his interest in them and gratitude for it by praying for them. Noble example! He goes on to say that he desired certain things for them—lit., "asked," lifted up his desires. I. THE MATTER OF THE APOSTLE'S DESIRE. 1. That they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will. (1) It is one thing to have a full knowledge and another to be filled with knowledge. As far as God or His will are concerned we cannot have a full knowledge. God only knows the love, the glory, the will of God. But it is possible to be filled with the knowledge of God. The smallest of cups may be as full as the great ocean. So the smallest minds may be filled with the knowledge of God's will. (2) It was not immense spaces of vacant imaginations and day-dreamings that he desired, but knowledge of realities, that knowledge which is "the principal thing." (3) But not numerous details of knowledge in general; man's mind is too limited for that. He must choose between knowing a few things well and a large number indifferently. Hence Paul limits his petition to one all-important department—the will of God. This has two distinct applications—what God is determined to do Himself and what He is desirous that we should do. In the first sense it is used in Ephesians i. 11, and in the confession of Nebuchadnezzar; but it is more frequently used in the second. "Thy will be done on earth"—not done by God's self. So far as God's determination to take His own way is concerned His will is always done. The reference is to that will which we ought to do, and with the knowledge of which Paul prayed that the Colossians might be filled. 2. "In all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Wisdom was needed, profitable to direct to the things worthiest and best; and understanding, that they might penetrate beneath the surface of things, so as to be standing under them and thence understanding them. When thus understood, things are joined together in a unity of subjective thought, and a higher agency than man's gets abundant scope for a gracious and beneficent operation. 3. But the highest knowledge is but a means to an end (1 Cor. xiii. 1-3). The knowledge possessed by God, though immense, is not the most glorious of His attributes; even to Him it is but a means to an end. It is but one of His natural attributes. The most illustrious of God's attributes are the moral—those which have a will within them. II. THE PURPOSE OF HIS DESIRE. It is not therefore surprising that the apostle should guard the Colossians against the idea that they need aim no higher than this knowledge. He asked that they might have it, that—1. They should (1) walk—lit., "walk about." He seized a prominent feature of human society. Men walk hither and thither in

their homes, in the streets, and in the country. They walk out in the morning, "go about their business"; and in the evening walk about within the circle of their friends and visit. In the homes mothers walk about adjusting various details. (2) There are different ways of demeaning ourselves as we walk about. Some go about stealthily to entrap the unwary and confiding; some in the dark to conceal their evil deeds; some bent on making profit of others, or on amusement. Paul might have prayed that the Colossians might walk circumspectly, humbly, consistently, with gifts in their hands or love in their hearts; but he chooses to say that ye may walk about in a way worthy of the Lord. (3) It is assumed that the transcendent worth is in the Lord. As the Apocalyptic visions show us, in the estimation of all heavenly beings He is infinitely worthy; and hence it is that He is worth all the possible honour that can be reflected on Him by the most beautiful demeanour and most costly sacrifices of His disciples. Hence we should ever make it our aim to walk worthy of Him, and all our knowledge must be subservient to this. 2. The Colossians are told that if they do so Christ will take note of every step we take, and be pleased. He will appreciate our aim, and have in reference to our conduct a feeling of pleasure. How different this from "putting Him to an open shame." We may make our Saviour happy, and not only in reference to a few acts of exceptional effort, but in reference to all the humble incidents of our every-day life. 3. But nothing will be really pleasing if fruitfulness be wanting. (1) Leaves will not suffice, nor blossoms. Every Colossian was to be a tree of righteousness to bring forth fruit for the refreshment of the great Husbandman. (2) Fruitful in every good work—in long-suffering in the home and beyond; in the continual restraint and guidance of all the passions; in the fruits of the Spirit—"love, joy, peace," &c. (3) What are the means of this abounding fruitfulness? "By the knowledge of God." The most effective guarantee for increase in fruitfulness is the knowledge of God with which he desired they might be filled. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee," &c. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Spiritual knowledge and its practical results*:—I. THE PRECIOUSNESS OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. Consider—1. The intensity of the apostle's desire for it. It is the subject of earnest, ceaseless prayer. 2. The men for whom it is desired. Saints and faithful brethren, who knew the grace of God in truth, and were bringing forth fruit to God. We must not cease to pray for those who know the Lord that they may know more. 3. The measure of this knowledge. "Filled"—grand scholarship to have mind, heart, whole manhood filled with knowledge. When a measure is full of wheat there is no room for chaff. True knowledge excludes error. If we have empty places in our minds, unstored by holy teaching, they will be an invitation to the devil to enter and dwell. Try and know Divine truth more intimately. You know a man, for you pass him in the streets with a nod; you know another far better, for you lodge in the same house with him; but you know him best of all whose troubles and joys you have shared, and with whom you have had the closest fellowship. 4. The matter of it. The revealed will of God. (1) The perceptive will. "What wilt Thou have me to do?" (2) The will of God as it constitutes the gospel. "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that believeth." (3) "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." 5. The manner. (1) "In all wisdom," which is better than knowledge, for it is knowledge rightly used. Knowledge may find room for folly, but wisdom casts it out. Knowledge may be the horse, but wisdom is the driver. Wisdom enables you to bring your knowledge practically to bear upon life, to separate the precious from the vile, and rightly conduct your affairs. "All" wisdom—wisdom that will be useful in the shop, the counting-house, the church, &c. (2) That wisdom operates by a spiritual understanding that is powerful within. This is an inward knowledge of truth, a spiritual discernment, taste, experience, and reception of truth whereby the soul feeds upon it and takes it into herself. II. THE PRACTICAL RESULT OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. "That ye may walk"—not that they might talk, sit down and meditate, and enjoy themselves. He desires that they may be instructed, so as to walk—1. According to the best model. Let not a disciple walk so as to bring disgrace upon his Lord! When you walk with a king you should be royal in gait; when you commune with a prince you should not act the clown. It is well to have no lower standard than the life of Jesus, the life of tenderness, self-sacrifice, love, holy service, and communion with God. 2. So as to be pleasing to our best friend. (1) Some live to please themselves, or their wives, neighbours, and some, the devil. Our business is to please Him whose servants we are. Without holiness no man shall see Him, much less please Him. (2) Unto all

pleasing—from the moment we rise till we lie down, in eating and drinking, &c.

(3) Paul desires that we may be filled with knowledge to this end. If I do not know the will of God, how can I do it? 3. That we may produce the best fruit. Without knowledge we cannot be fruitful. Some are hindered in this because they do not know how to set about holy service. How can a man be fruitful as a preacher if he does not know what to preach? In a hundred ways ignorance will make us run risks, lose opportunities of usefulness, and fall into dangerous mistakes. 4. That he may cultivate a comprehensive variety of the best things. "In every." Here is room and range enough. Let works of obedience, testimony, zeal, charity, piety, all be found in your life. Do not select big things as your spiritual line, but glorify the Lord in the littles. The Lord Jesus, if He were here, would gladly do a thousand things which His poor little servants are too great to touch.

III. THE REFLEX ACTION OF HOLINESS ON KNOWLEDGE. 1. Holiness is the road to knowledge. 2. This knowledge rises in tone—before it was in God's will, now it is in God Himself. 3. He would have in us increased capacity to know yet more. In verse 9 it is "filled"; but if a man is full of knowledge, how can it increase? Make the vessel larger. Let no man think he can go no further. Bernard says: "He is not good at all who doth not desire to be better." (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Intercessory prayer:—It would be a useful exercise if we would give thanks for the gifts and graces of our brethren. I am afraid that we are more inclined to spy out their faults, and to suppose that we deplore them, than we are to discern the work of the Holy Spirit in them. Now, Paul surveyed the Church at Colosse, and observed their faith, love, and hope, and thanked God for them. But he noted that they were somewhat lacking in knowledge. They differed from the Corinthians, who abounded in talent and were enriched with knowledge. The Colossians had fewer gifted brethren, and as Paul would not have them come behind in any desirable attainment, he offered this prayer. He knew that spiritual ignorance is the constant source of error, instability, and sorrow; and therefore he desired that they might be soundly taught in the things of God. *Intercessory prayer is—I. A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THE WORK OF CHRISTIANS FOR ONE ANOTHER.* We are not sent into the world to live unto ourselves, but we are members of one body, and each member is expected to contribute to the health and comfort of the whole. We cannot all preach or distribute alms, but we can all pray. II. *AN INVALUABLE PROOF OF LOVE AND THE CREATOR OF MORE LOVE.* The man who will pray for me, will forgive me if I offend him, and relieve me if I am in necessity. III. *AN INFALLIBLE MEANS OF OBTAINING THE BLESSINGS WE DESIRE FOR OUR FRIENDS.* The unselfish devotion which pleads as eagerly for others as for itself is so pleasing to God that He puts great honour upon it. If we desire any blessing for them, our best course is to pray. If we wish them converted, taught of God, quickened to a nobler life, &c., take the case to God in prayer. IV. *WILL BE ALL THE MORE VALUABLE IF IT IS OUR IMMEDIATE RESORT.* "Since the day we heard it," Paul began to pray at once. Whenever you perceive the holy change begun, pray at once that it may proceed with power, and we shall find that God in answering quickly gives a double blessing. He who wins earthly riches is most diligent in their pursuit, and he shall be richest towards God who is most diligent in supplication. V. *WILL BE ALL THE MORE VALUABLE IF THEY ARE INCESSANT AS WELL AS IMMEDIATE.* "We cease not." He was always praying for them in the sense he explains, "and to desire." Desire is the essence of prayer. Though you cannot be always speaking in prayer, you can be always desiring. The act of prayer is blessed, the habit more so, the spirit most so, and this can continue for months and years. VI. *WILL BE INCREASED IN VALUE IF OFFERED IN UNION WITH OTHER SAINTS.* "We also." "If two of you agree as touching My kingdom." Here is Paul, and with him youthful Timothy, who, compared with Paul, is inconsiderable; yet Paul's prayer is all the more effectual because Timothy's is joined to it. Our Lord sent out His servants two and two, and it is well when they come back to Him in prayer two and two. The habit of frequent prayer together is to be commended. (*Ibid.*)

The value of intercessory prayer:—An aged woman, a member of my church, whom I frequently met, always appeared to me to have a more than common interest in the prosperity of religion. She would often inquire: "Are any of our young people coming to Christ?" One day, as I was passing her house, she called me in. Says she: "I asked you to come in here because I wanted to tell you a revival is coming." "How do you know that?" said I. "Dear me," says she, "now don't think me one of that sort of folks who think themselves particular favourites of the Lord, as they were inspired. But I have got faith, and I have got eyes and ears, and I

believe in prayer. Perhaps you may think me too certain, but I tell you a revival is coming; and I don't know it by a miracle either, or because I am any better than other people, or nearer to God. But, for this good while, every day when I have been out in my garden, I have heard that old deacon" (pointing to his house) "at prayer in his chamber, where he thinks nobody hears him. The window is open just a little way off from my garden, and I have heard him praying there every day. He is not able to leave his house much, because he has got only one leg; but if he can't work he can pray; and his prayers will be answered." A revival did come. Before a year from that time more than a hundred persons in that congregation were led to indulge hope that they had been born of the Spirit. Among them were a son and a daughter of that old man of prayer, and a grandson of this woman who believed in prayer. (*I. S. Spencer, D.D.*)

The blessed occupancy.—This is possible. Paul was in its enjoyment. I. THE NATURE OF GOD'S WILL. The will is the expression of the inner nature. God is love. His will is good will to all. It means happiness for all who will not thwart His loving purpose. II. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL. This can be obtained by being willing to do, by searching the Scriptures and listening to the voice of the Spirit. III. THE MEASURE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE. "Filled"—no room for self. Every cupboard opened, door unlocked, window raised, and the entire being flooded. Blessings then flow out. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*)

The knowledge of the will of God.—I. THE WILL OF GOD. 1. The phrase brings before us the personality of Deity. He is not a blind force, but a conscious being, or He could not have a will. 2. The text contradicts Deism, which says: "God does not concern Himself with us." 3. But imagine God to have a malevolent will concerning us! As it is, however, the will of God moves not merely under the influence of His intelligence and righteousness, but of His mercy. It is "in Christ Jesus concerning us." 4. This will has reference to our whole nature. (1) To our mind; and therefore God has put before us doctrine. God has a will concerning our thoughts, and therefore has provided us with themes for meditation. (2) To our hearts. We may not trust, distrust, love, everything we please. God has indicated the objects and the measure of our confidence and affection. (3) To our will; giving us principles and motives, and rules of action, so that His will directs us in all things. This is not bondage, but freedom. He is the slave who is tethered to his whims and wishes; he is free who moves in harmony with the will which is connected with perfect wisdom and love. II. The will of God REVEALED. 1. Not entirely, as, *e.g.*, to your future circumstances; these are mercifully concealed. 2. The media employed. (1) Conscience—imperfect, but under Christ's influence gradually becoming sound. (2) God's Word. (3) God's Spirit. (4) Providence. (5) Christ, in whom it is perfectly embodied. 3. There is some little difficulty in getting at this will. You must search the Scriptures, and carefully analyze your own conscience to judge whether it is an index of God's will. But the knowledge is well worth the trouble. If you take no trouble you will be perplexed, but if you do He will teach you. III. The will of God known. The revelation is distinct from the knowledge, and may be possessed without it. The knowledge must be sought. Look at it as—1. Full. (1) We may know doctrine and not precept; both, and not the promises; or all partially. Knowledge is full when we know all we need to know. (2) A young disciple in his novitiate cannot know all that is revealed, nor indeed the mature. There are many things concealed from the Church in its present state. (3) But there are things which can be comprehended in the present age, and the present state of the believer's mind. The Bible opens like flowers. You must sometimes wait before a text and seek a right influence on your spirit before the meaning will be manifest. The Bible to the child has one manifestation, to the young man another, and to the mature man another. 2. Correctly applied. It may be misapplied; hence the prayer "in all wisdom," &c. We must get below the letter to the underlying Spirit, and with Divine sagacity apply it to our circumstances. 3. A fit subject for prayer. 4. A subject of deep anxiety to ministers as essential to the holiness and activity of the Church. (*S. Martin.*)

The knowledge of God.—1. This knowledge lies at the foundation of all true religion. It is the want or indistinctness of it that occasions the stupidity of sinners, the false hopes of professors, and most of the religious errors that abound. Although it is open to all, there is very little of it. There is so much unbelief, pride, worldliness, guilt, which shrinks from clear views of God, sluggishness, which binds the soul to earth, that the mass even of Christians pass to the grave with a very incompetent knowledge of God. Now and then a Christian arises of pre-eminent piety, and when

you search for the cause of it you find it in his superior knowledge of God. **2.** In general, the great end for which we were sent into the world was to learn the character of our Master, by studying His glories in His works and word, that we might obey and enjoy Him. The object on which His eye is fixed, and which He will fully attain, is that the earth may be filled with the knowledge of His glory. **3.** He is the Being with whom we have the most intimate and interesting connection, and therefore it chiefly concerns us to be acquainted with Him. "In Him we live and move," &c., and He will be our final Judge. **4.** There is room for far more enlarged knowledge of God than any of us have yet acquired. In His nature are treasures of knowledge which eternal research will not exhaust. Of course none but Christ could with perfect propriety say, "I know this," but we may follow on to know the Lord. **5.** This knowledge is—I. **MOST PURIFYING.** A sight of God is transforming. When with open face we behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are charged with the same image. When God is seen in all the majesty of His glory and holiness the Christian cannot, dare not, wilfully sin. **II. MOST HUMBLING.** Other knowledge "puffeth up," but the more God is seen, the more abased the soul will be. All the glooms of guilt and fears of hell which are not accompanied with a spiritual discernment of God will not humble the soul. When Isaiah saw the Lord he exclaimed, "I am a man of unclean lips," and when Peter discovered the Godhead of Christ he fell at His feet, saying, "Depart from me," &c. **III. MOST EXALTING.** It will do more to ennoble the mind and elevate it above vulgar disputes, than all other views. If it is a dignity to be intimately acquainted with great men, what is the dignity of knowing and being known by God. **IV. MOST BLESSED.** One direct view of God fills the soul with greater peace than the most splendid attainments in other branches of knowledge, and than all the glories of the world. This is to be the happiness of heaven, because nothing greater can be provided. (*E. D. Griffin, D.D.*) *The experimental knowledge of God the end of all Christian endeavour:*—It is for the want of keeping this end steadily in view that many persons make so little progress. Their efforts are misdirected. They confound the means and effects of religion with its life. Digging, manuring, pruning, and fruit-bearing are not the life of a tree. What, then, is the soul of religion towards which all efforts are to be directed. **I. THE LIFE OF TRUE RELIGION IS AN EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.** Such an appreciation of the excellence of His character as satisfies the soul. Philip said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." No earthly source of happiness does suffice. The pursuit of earthly desires is like the countryman's chase after the rainbow. They one after the other disappoint those who attain them: Their prismatic colours all vanish when we come close to them, and some new rainbow is seen ahead to lure us into another fruitless pursuit. But our Creator does not mock us by implanting great yearnings after happiness which have nothing to correspond to them. In the knowledge and enjoyment of Him man can find rest. **II. THIS KNOWLEDGE IS THE END OF ENDS, TO WHICH EVERY OTHER PART OF THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM IS SUBORDINATED.** It is the end of the atoning and interceding work of our Lord. This removes barriers which preclude communion. Any knowledge of God independently of Christ must frighten us from Him, for God is infinitely holy, and His holiness is a consuming fire. **III. THE EXERCISES WHICH GO MOST DIRECTLY TO THIS END.** **1.** Living much with Him. If we only come across a man occasionally and in public, and see nothing of his private life, we cannot be said to know him. All the knowledge of God which many professing Christians have is derived from the formal salute they make to Him in their prayers. But no progress can be made thus. Try to draw God down into your daily work; consult Him about it; offer it as a contribution to His service; ask Him to help you in it and to bless it; refer to Him in your temptations; go back at once to Him if you have left Him; in short, walk hand in hand with Him, dreading above all things to quit His side; seek not so much to pray as to live in an atmosphere of prayer. **2.** Studying His mind in His Word. We may be said to know an author, when we have so carefully read his works as to imbibe his spirit. It is through His Word that God speaks to us, as it is through prayer we speak to Him. Cultivate a taste for the Holy Scriptures. "Oh, how sweet are Thy words unto my taste. . . . All the day long is my study of it." My mind in which it is stored is always recurring to it in the intervals of business, turning it over with fresh inquiry into its significance, finding new illustrations of its truth in nature, life, and experience. There is a study of Scripture which is analogous to ejaculatory prayer, which interweaves the Word into the daily life of the Christian, a rumination which

can be carried on without book. 3. The discipline of life. If a man has no dealings with us personally, though he may be no stranger to us by reputation, we cannot be said to know him. But if transactions pass between us his character transpires. Now God comes close up to us, if we give our hearts to Him, and deals with us in all the changing scenes of life. So long as people keep Him at arm's length, He only sweeps round the circumference of their existence. Those who desire to have a practical knowledge of Him in His dealings try to learn the lesson of every part of their experience. IV. INCREASE IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, as it characterizes the true Christian's present course WILL BE HIS BUSINESS THROUGHOUT ETERNITY. We are not to conceive of a glorified saint as if he were stereotyped and could advance no further in the knowledge of God. Our nature is so constituted as not to acquiesce in a particular measure of knowledge on any subject. And why, as God is infinite, and His resources of wisdom, power, and love are inexhaustible, may not a blessed eternity be spent in fresh discoveries of His glory, each of which will throw preceding discoveries into the shade? (*Dean Goulburn.*) *God known imperfectly but really*:—No man can take a pencil and mark the features of Jehovah, and say: "Thus far is God, and no farther." How poor a God must that be whom I can understand! He would be no larger than the measure of my thought—and that would be small indeed. No man can limit and define God. after all intellectual statements have been made, after all definitions have been given, immensely more is left untouched than has been touched. But the functions of the Divine nature, the quality of that nature and its moral essence, one may suspect or know without comprehending all of God. Bring me but a glass of water, And I know what water is. I may not know, if I have not travelled, what are the springs in the mountain, what are cascades, what are the streams that thunder through deep gorges, what are broadening rivers, what are bays, or what is the ocean; and yet I may know what water is. A drop on my finger tells me its quality. From that I know that it is not wood, that it is not rock, that it is not air, that it is not anything but water. I am not able, by searching, to find out God unto perfection; and yet I know that, so far as I have found Him out, and so far as He is ever going to be found out, whatever there is in nobility, whatever there is in goodness, whatever there is in sweetness, whatever there is in patience; whatever can be revealed by the cradle, by the crib, by the couch, by the table; whatever there is in household love and in other loves; whatever there is in heroism among men; whatever there is of good report; whatever has been achieved by imagination or by reason; whatever separates man from the brute beast, and lifts him above the clod—I know that all these elements belong to God, the eternal and universal Father. Although I may not be able to draw an encyclopaedic circle and say: "All inside of that is God, and anything outside of it is not God;" yet I know that everything which tends upward, that everything which sets from a lower life to a higher, that everything which leads from the basilar to the coronal, that everything whose results are good, is an interpretation of God, who, though He may be found to be other than we suppose, will be found not less, but more glorious than we suspect. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Knowledge of Divine will*:—The knowledge of the Divine will embraces in itself the knowledge (1) of the law, which shows us the abyss of our misery, and also proposes to the regenerate a rule of new life; (2) of the gospel, which opens to us the depths of Divine mercy, and also teaches the method of obtaining salvation. Neither is the bare apprehension of these things called the knowledge of the Divine will, but the efficacious apprehension which applies Christ to ourselves, and expresses the rule of the law in our life and actions, as far as in us lies. (1 John ii. 3) the commandments as well concerning faith as obedience. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Filled with the knowledge of His will*:—The world is in darkness. This is the beginning of a natural day. The sun has not yet risen. Here is a great building. You see it; the sun rises and touches the top of it; gradually it touches the highest ridges and windows; then it comes down, and touches another story, and another, till at last the light, in all its fulness and amplitude, fills the whole house and bathes the whole building in the splendour of its rays. Every room—from the lowest to the highest—all filled! Now, that gives you a faint idea of what the apostle means. The knowledge of God fills, not one faculty alone, not the intellect looking at truth objectively, but the whole nature; feeling, imagination, sensibility, all flooded with this Divine light. (*T. Rinney.*) *The use of spiritual understanding*:—By wisdom and spiritual understanding the Christians at Colosse would be led to "distinguish things

that differ"; to detect the sophistry of new teachers; to discern the dangerous bearings of ingenious but seducing systems; to keep close to the letter and spirit of Scripture; to look around on the whole compass of truth and all the methods of God's dispensations before they committed themselves to any conclusive opinion; to use every part of Divine revelation for the purposes, and in the proportion, and according to the order, and in the spirit of the divinely-inspired record. (*Bishop D. Wilson.*)

*That ye walk worthy of the Lord.—Life a walk:—*Having entered the world, at once we leave the moment of our nativity, as a starting-place, and incessantly advance towards death, as a common habitation, where, sooner or later, all men meet. Other travellers may, if they please, delay their journey, or retrace their steps; but we cannot do either. Time, enfolding us from the first moment of our life, perpetually carries us forward, whether we wake or sleep, whether we consent to it or resist, without permitting us to turn back, or indulge in the shortest repose. We are like him on board a vessel propelled by sea and wind, whose personal motion does not arrest or abate his course. But as the roads and projects of travellers are very different, so there is a great diversity of habit and manners in men's lives. Wicked men follow one way, and good men another. The pagan steers one course, the Jew another, the Mohammedan another, and the Christian another, each wholly different from the others. This is what the Scripture calls "the way of man"; that is, the fashion and method of life which each man follows. And suitably to this expressive figure, it often makes use of the word walking, to signify a regulating and framing of the life after some certain manner, whether good or evil; meaning the tenor of our lives, and our customary deportment. There is nothing more common in the Psalms, and in the Proverbs, than these forms of speech; "to walk in integrity"; or, on the contrary, "to walk in fraud and iniquity": and in the writings of the New Testament, "to walk in light," or, "in darkness"; "after the Spirit," or, "after the flesh"; with other similar phrases, all signifying a certain manner and condition of life, good or evil, as it is qualified. Agreeably to this scriptural style, the apostle says here, "that ye might walk"; meaning, that you may live, that you may regulate and form your lives. (*J. Daillé.*)

*Walk worthily:—*It is said that among the high Alps, at certain seasons, the traveller is told to proceed quietly; for on the steep slopes overhead the snow hangs so evenly balanced that the sound of a voice or the report of a gun may destroy the equilibrium, and bring down an immense avalanche that will overwhelm everything in ruin in its downward path. And so about our way there may be a soul in the very crisis of its moral history, trembling between life and death, and a mere touch or shadow may determine its destiny. A young lady, who was deeply impressed with the truth, and was ready, under conviction of sin, to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" had all her solemn impressions dissipated by the unseemly jesting of a member of the Church. Her irreverent and worldly spirit cast a repellent shadow on the young lady not far from the kingdom of God. How important that we should always and everywhere walk worthy of our high calling as Christians. (*T. Stork.*)

*Walking so as to please God:—*1. All mere speculative knowledge is profitless. If the whole world of science were before me, and yet if its principles were not applied, it might puff me up but it would be of no utility. Much more is this so with regard to Divine truth. I may have all knowledge, but if I lack the faith that worketh by love it is vain. 2. But there is one peculiar glory about Divine truth—he that knows one truth cannot be wholly ignorant of its bearings. It is a chain that has involved in it link within link, and he that touches one can move the whole. *E.g.,* He that has a spiritual knowledge of God loves Him, and he that loves Him loves His will, and he that loves His will desires to do it. 1. THE WORTHY WALK. There are similar passages in Eph. iv. 1; 1 Thess. ii. 12. 1. Every man living in sin is dead, a cumberer of the ground, and only fit to be cut down. This is his worthlessness. He is an unprofitable servant and spiritually worthless. This is one of the first teachings of the Spirit, and even the saint is compelled to confess that in Him dwelleth no good thing (Gen. xxxii. 9-10). This was the confession of the Centurion and the Prodigal. 2. But although in the natural man this is so, and the spiritual man is made to feel it—yet the latter knows that he has been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, redeemed for glory, and renewed by the Holy Spirit, and so is made worthy by grace. 3. Hence he is under powerful obligations to walk worthy by being fruitful in good works. This the natural man cannot be any more than a bad tree can produce good fruit, but the renewed man can be and is. (1) The characteristics of a good work are—(a) that God has commanded it;

(b) that it is the result of faith—for without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith first pleads the righteousness of Christ as the ground of acceptance, and then lays hold of the strength of Christ as the power for performance. "In the Lord I have righteousness and strength." (2) In these sorts of works we are to be fruitful. There must be no reserve. All we have and are is to be devoted to God's service. II. THE HIGH AIM—to please God in all things. 1. This is impossible to the natural man who is without faith. Even a child of God does many things that are displeasing to God. There was but one who was perfectly well-pleasing to God. But in Him we are pleasing too—for we are made the righteousness of God in Him. 2. The Christian aims at acting out this righteousness in unreserved obedience, in little things as well as great—in eating and drinking, &c. With such a life God is well pleased. III. THE DIVINE KNOWLEDGE. Notice the order of procedure—knowing the will of God, doing it, and by doing it brought into closer acquaintance with God. "If any man will do His will he shall know." "Thus shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." David knew more than the ancients, because he kept God's precepts. (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*) All pleasing. I. WHAT IS MEANT BY ALL PLEASING? We are to please everybody that we may please God. 1. The wish to please or to be liked by everybody is a virtue or a sin according as it is a means or an end. If you please only to be admired it is selfish and has no religion in it. But if you wish to please that Christ may be liked, and that you may have more influence for good, then in pleasing others you will please God. 2. By this rule we reconcile St. Paul's apparent contradiction, "If I yet pleased men I should not be a servant of Christ," with "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification." It is evident that we may, on the one hand, so make compromises in order to please that we shall not walk worthy of the Lord, and that on the other we may think we are walking worthy of the Lord by a strictness and severity which are certainly not unto all pleasing. 3. It would be quite a mistake to suppose that Christ did not please men. There were some, of course, He never tried to please—the proud and hypocritical. But he pleased the multitude. The record of his early life is "He grew in favour both with God and man;" and afterwards "all the people rejoiced for the glorious things which were done by Him." II. HOW DID CHRIST PLEASE MEN? AND HOW MAY WE BY PLEASING LIKE HIM, WALK WORTHY OF HIM? 1. The first secret of all pleasing is humility. If you meet a man who is in everything your superior, and yet he treats you as if he were your equal without the least appearance of condescension, there is a charm in that which every one feels. This was exactly what Christ did and what we are to do. 2. Sympathy. It is the spring of all power to throw yourself into another's mind, look with his eye, feel with his touch, to do this with all, and with the countenance and manner as well as the word, and to be always respectful with your sympathy. This is the capability to please, and Jesus had it without measure. 3. That potent and rare art of seeing the good in everybody. Christ saw the Israelite indeed in the rude Nathaniel; He loved the impetuous, self-ignorant young man; and asked his Father to forgive His murderers since they knew not what they did. Is there then anything more Christ-like than to see the germ of piety before it develops, the bit of blue on a dark sky, the excuse in every thing? He who knows how to do that "walks unto all pleasing." III. IT IS THE DUTY AND IN THE POWER OF EVERY ONE TO BE PLEASING. For to please does not depend upon the face, dress, form, riches, talents, wealth, &c., but upon moral character, tact, effort, and simple motive. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) Fruitful in every good work. *Fruitfulness and progress*:—I. FERTILITY implies—1. Life. A fruit-bearing tree is necessarily a living tree. The fruitful Christian has been grafted into the Saviour and partakes of His life. This life is worthy of our nature, capability, and destiny. How different the idea of many. Business, money, pleasure, science, art—the pursuit of these is life; all that it demands of energy, all that it imparts of joy. 2. Culture. The tree left without pruning will soon bring forth leaves only. So the fruitful Christian is one who is under the care of the Divine husbandman (John xv. 2). Abounding fertility is the result of His gracious culture. The pruning processes of His providence are often necessary. Without these there may be woody suckers or luxuriant foliage, but no fruit. 3. The Christian living in Christ and pruned by God is to be fruitful in every good work (John xv. 8). The works to be done must be good in their nature, influence, and issue, glorifying to God, beneficial to man, and worthy of the life the Christian has in union with His Lord. Note the breadth of requirement—"every." The physical and social elevation of the alien, the outcast, and the ignorant should go hand and hand with saving agencies. Was Christ not Physician for body and soul, the loftiest Philanthropist,

the sincerest Patriot, the truest Friend? II. PROGRESS. The fruitfulness is not exhaustive. The tree grows all the more healthily when its fruitfulness abounds. 1. Hence the connection here between fertility and progress. We must bear fruit that we may be strong, and do good that we may grow. Many forget this and find that "withholding more than is meet tendeth to poverty." Their selfishness starves their souls. 2. The real means of growth is the knowledge of God. Our fruitfulness may be a condition, but it cannot make us grow. The knowledge of God is the true nourishment of the soul. A God in shadow or unknown creates superstition, and to view Him in only one aspect of His character will lead either to fanaticism or mysticism. 3. This knowledge is the only knowledge which encompasses our whole being and fills the whole man. It supplies truth for the intellect, conscience, and heart; stimulus and nourishment for every attribute of our being. Devotion to mere human studies may develop the intellectual side of our nature at the expense of the moral and social, but the growth which this promotes is symmetrical and full. Conclusion: These two things embrace two sides of our nature, action and reflection. They act and react on each other. The activity would pass into formalism were it not fed by the contemplation of God. Our meditation would pass into fanaticism were it not regulated by active duty. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Fruitfulness*:—This metaphor is taken from a tree; not every tree, but one bearing fruit (Psa. i. 3; John xv. 5). From this comparison note—1. As no tree can bear fruit, unless it hath a certain life-giving seed in itself, and is nourished daily with good sap; so no one can bear spiritual fruit, unless he hath in himself the seed of the Spirit, and is daily watered with the outpourings of Divine grace. 2. As that tree is pleasing to God, which does not occupy the ground in vain, neither dissipates the moisture which it draws on leaves and blossoms alone; but produces good fruits: so he alone is pleasing to God, who does not uselessly occupy room in the Church, neither wears the appearance and form of godliness alone, but puts forth its power and virtue by fruitfulness. 3. As a tree lives and bears fruit not for itself but its owner, and for others to whom he sees fit to impart its fruits: so a godly man ought not to live for himself alone, nor to care only that his life be honourable to himself, but that it may be honourable to God and beneficial to all his brethren. 4. Behold the spacious manner in which the fruitfulness of a godly man is exercised. In this he differs from a tree. For no one seeks different fruits from the same tree, but God expects every Christian to produce every kind of good works (Gal. v. 22). There are, therefore, two things to be noted in the matter of the fruitfulness. (1) That God does not approve of every kind of fruitfulness, but restricts it to good works. But those are called good works which are commanded and directed by God. Wisely and piously spake Cyprian, "The exercises of righteousness are to be chosen not by our own will, but by the will of God." And in Isaiah God complains of the Jews, that they worshipped Him by the precepts of men (Isa. xxix. 13). (2) That fruitfulness of any one kind is not sufficient, but we must be fruitful in every good work. If any one produce the good fruit of alms deeds, and mingle with them the impure fruits of lewdness; or if any one be conspicuous for chastity, and defile himself by avarice; he would not answer the Divine will, or the apostle's desire of being fruitful in every good work: nay, he is accounted by God bad and unclean. For who shall say that any one is clean, who is wont to wallow even in a single sewer? (1 Thess. v. 22-23). (*Bishop Davenant.*) "*Fruitful in every good work*":—From the decalogue downwards. Scripture teaching has been poured impartially into two moulds—to know the truth and to do the right. I. THE NATURE OF EACH. 1. Fruitfulness in every good work. (1) Work. They who find Christ find rest, but not exemption from work; "peace in believing" only supplies a foothold whereon the labourer may stand more steadily and so work with more effect. (2). Good work, not energy of action merely. (a) The Master is good: God. (b) The motive: love. (c) The aim: the good of the world. (d) The standard: the law. (3) Every. (a) Not that man should go round the world and meddle with everything, but that he should neglect no opportunity that comes in his way. Do not waste time and effort in trying to do all at once, but cultivate a universal willingness. (b) Act those virtues, too, that are not in your nature. When a man of might bears the infirmities of the weakest, and the timid display a martyr courage, there is more conspicuous evidence of grace. (c) Do not pick and choose but do whatever God has put in your way, whether the opening of a church or the digging of a well, the support of a missionary or the widening of a street. (4) Fruitful. This indicates—Spontaneousness. The tree has first been

made good, and then the fruit grows spontaneously. A partaker of Christ gives forth Christ-like actions. There is a good deal of artificial charity. People can tie oranges to a fir-tree; but true Christian beneficence is a fruit that grows and is not tied on. The water in the pipes connected with a reservoir must flow by reason of the pressure from above. "The love of Christ constraineth us." (b) Sweetness and profitableness. (c) Abundance. 2. Increase in the knowledge of God. (1) In obtaining reconciliation through Christ we have the beginning of this knowledge, and those who attain the beginning can never rest there. (2) Among other features of the Divine nature which the experienced disciple knows better now, the Fatherliness of God is perhaps that in which the greatest advances are attained. It is long ere perfect love casts out all fear; but much progress is made in its diminution by the inlet of confiding love. It is like the process of exhausting the air from a glass cup, and so making it adhere more and more firmly to the table. More and more fear is drawn off from the Christian's bosom; more and more firmly therefore does it cleave to the Almighty strength it leans upon. II. THE UNION AND RECIPROCAL RELATIONS OF THE TWO. 1. They grow together not only as two parallel boughs of one tree, one of which might live if the other were wrenched off. The union is like two sides of a human body: if one were wanting the other would die. 2. Contemplate the two sides alternately. (1) Active obedience is necessary to the increase of spiritual experience. Spiritual contemplation soon runs to seed when duty is neglected. The old monks desired to increase in the knowledge of God, and hid themselves in caves where good works were impossible. So they made themselves barren in that wherein God had commanded them to be fruitful. Simon on the top of his pillar with the world wondering at him as a saint, did not know God so well as he might if he had kept a shop all day and played with his children at night. In active life you will make most progress in this knowledge. The more work you do the more you will be wearied, which will lead you to lean oftener on the Father and thus increase your acquaintance. (2) Contemplative communion with God is necessary to successful activity. If you rush into work without prayer the work will wane like the flame of a lamp when the oil is exhausted. When our work increases in bulk we need more of experimental communion to animate the extended body. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Multiform fruitfulness*:—You never saw in nature a tree which yielded all sorts of fruit, and you never will. I have seen a tree so grafted that it produced four kinds of fruit at one time, but I remarked that it was a poor business in reference to two of the varieties; for one of the grafts, more natural than the others to the parent stem, drew off the most of the sap, and flourished well, but robbed the other branches. The second sort of fruit managed to live pretty fairly, but not so well as it would have done on its own stem. As for the third and fourth, they were mere attempts at fruit of the smallest size. This tree was shown to me as a great curiosity; it is not likely that practical gardeners will be encouraged by the experiment. But what would you think of a tree upon which you saw grapes, and figs, and olives, and apples, and all other good fruits growing at one time? This is the emblem of what instructed believers will become: they will produce all sorts of goodness and graciousness to the honour of their heavenly Father. I have no doubt that you will naturally abound most in certain good works for which you have the largest capacity, but still nothing ought to come amiss to you. In the great house of the Church we want servants who will not be simply cooks or house-maids, but general servants, maids of all-work, prepared to do anything and everything. I have known persons in household employment in England who would not do a turn beyond their special work to save their masters' lives: these are a sort of servants of whom the fewer the better. In India this is carried to a ridiculous extreme. The Hindoo water-bearer will not sweep the house, nor light a fire, nor brush your clothes—he will fetch water, and nothing else: you must, therefore, have a servant for each separate thing, and then each man will do his own little bit, but he will not go an inch beyond. When we enter into Christ's Church we should come prepared to wash the saints' feet, or bear their burdens, or bind up their wounds, or fight their foes, or act as steward, or shepherd, or nurse. It has been well said that if two angels in heaven were summoned to serve the Lord, and there were two works to be done, an empire to be ruled, or a crossing to be swept, neither angel would have a choice as to which should be appointed him, but would gladly abide the will of the Lord. Let us be equally prepared for anything, for everything by which fruit can be produced for the Well-beloved. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

The necessity of Divine knowledge to Christian fruitfulness.—There is a well in your garden, and a pump for raising the water to the surface. This for ordinary seasons is sufficient. But at length a drought compels you to make a greater demand upon the well. Every day you ply the handle harder and longer, to preserve the life of the languishing vegetation. At last the supply fails, and you ply your task in vain. No water comes, because there has been too much working; the work degenerates into a barren noise. What then? Sink your well deeper, and it will stand a greater strain. We must go and do likewise when, by too long-continued activity, our movement becomes fruitless labour. When we work till our souls are wrought out, we must go deeper down into the hidden veins of the soul's supply—go deeper into the love of God, by secret communion with the Saviour; and the increase of His favour consciously compassing your soul will sustain a new and greater effort of Christian activity. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*)

The necessity of Christian fruitfulness to Divine knowledge.—In the case of the monks, their kite, so to speak, was pointing heavenward and rising; but it was not rising far enough nor fast enough. It seemed to be struggling upward, but held in check by the string that attached it to the ground. That line which bound it to the earth seemed the only hindrance of its flight to heaven. Like foolish children, they cut the line that bound it to the earth, expecting to see it then rising unimpeded to the sky; but, lo! the kite when so set free, instead of ascending majestically to heaven, whirled round two or three times wildly, giddily, and then fell flat upon the ground. Such was the result of Rome's effort to raise her votaries to heaven, by cutting their connection with the earth. The so-called saints fell lower than before. (*Ibid.*)

The essential connection between knowledge and piety.—As the swing of the pendulum to the right becomes the power which carries it to the left, and its swing to the left the power which carries it back to the right; so true good-doing makes the doer know God more, and true knowledge of God sends back the scholar with a new impulse to his work in the world. Moreover, by the balancing alternations of the pendulum aberrations are prevented, and the steady, true-going of the clock is secured; so the Christian life goes best which goes between a deep, contemplative, spiritual knowledge of God, and hearty practical work, as far as opportunity offers, for every interest of every brother man. These two God hath joined; let no man dare to put them asunder. (*Ibid.*)

No work must be declined.—You have probably read of a certain renowned corporal in the American service a century ago. A general as he rode along saw a body of men endeavouring to lift timber. They were short-handed, and the work lagged, but their famous corporal stood by ordering them about at a magnificent rate. The general paused and said, "Why don't you lend them help and put your shoulder to it?" "Why, sir," said the great little officer, "how can you think of such a thing? Do you know who I am? I am a corporal!" The general got off his horse, pulled off his coat, and helped to move the timber, and by his judicious help the soldiers achieved their task. Then he turned to the high and mighty gentleman and said, "Mr. Corporal, next time you want a man to do such work as this you can send for me. I am General Washington." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 11. Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power.—*God's all strength*.—I. **THE STRENGTH.** 1. The reference is not to intellectual strength, although no doubt as a highly intellectual man, the apostle would highly prize this in his brethren. It is important as a shield to protect from imposition, for guidance in times of sifting or wild speculation, and its possession widens the distance between man and the lower creation, and assimilates to Him whose understanding is infinite. 2. Here reference is to power—distinctively spiritual. Paul prayed that they might be strengthened in their ethical principles, so that they might be stronger in their faith, hope, and love. This was important for their Christian consistency, usefulness, and prosperity. II. **THE STRENGTHENING.** "Strengthened in all strength." As if the apostle conceived them as needing to be immersed in some other one's strength greater than their own: and as he was thinking of Divine strength, he did not scruple to say "all" strength, *i.e.*, strength all-sufficient. Not merely enough for some duties and trials, but such as would enable them to say, "I can do all things" (Phil. iv. 13). All kinds of strength belong to God, physical, intellectual, moral. "Nothing is too hard for the Lord." "Power belongeth unto God," and not only that which can create and uphold. What power of perception from which nothing is hidden! of memory! looking back into infinity; of prevision! looking forward into eternity. Hence this moral power. What power of goodness, righteousness, compassion, and forgiving fervour—all inherently infi-

nite. No wonder Paul speaks of "the power of His glory," the power that is inherent in His glory and therefore glorious. No wonder that he desires that the Colossians should be steeped in it. III. THE RESULT OF THE STRENGTHENING. 1. Patience is needed on the part of all in such a world as this. Men everywhere have had trials that have taxed them to the utmost, and will continue to have. But the reference here is to the trials which Christians have in addition as Christians, to which they are exposed for the gospel's sake at home and in society. 2. Long-suffering is akin to patient endurance. It is the opposite of irascibility in relation to persons who deal with us unreasonably or unkindly, whereas patience has to do with things. With trying things our difficulty is to endure; with trying persons to suppress irritability. 3. But these are not enough. Paul wants joyfulness in addition. But he knew that "the happy God" could and would make "all things work together for good," and so enable His people to "rejoice in the Lord alway." (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Strengthened with glorious power*.—I. Why does the apostle say, STRENGTHENED WITH "ALL" MIGHT? 1. To intimate that we fight not against one enemy, neither are opposed by weapons on one side only, but by many, and on every side. Unless we overcome these enemies, one and all, we are conquered. There is therefore need of all might against every kind of enemy. II. The apostle could have said, we are strengthened by God, or by His power; but he adds this epithet, GLORIOUS POWER. 1. That we may place the greater confidence in this Divine power. Because this very word contains in itself an earnest of victory and triumph; for this could not be glorious power, if it might be overcome by an evil spirit and sin (*Rom. viii.*). 2. It is called glorious power on account of the admirable mode of conquering the devil, the world, and the flesh. For the Spirit of God not immediately, by His absolute power, beats off these enemies of our salvation; but by inspiring us with strength, causes even ourselves to trample them under. Moreover, that power must necessarily be very admirable and glorious which makes feeble man, clothed with sinful flesh, to overcome the insults and wiles of devils, the alarms and solicitations of the flesh, the hatred, snares, and injuries of the whole world. Of this glorious power God Himself speaks (2 Cor. xii. 9; *Vide* 1 Cor. i. 27). (*Bishop Davenant.*) *The source and object of spiritual strength*.—I. THE PROCESS EXPERIENCED. "Strengthened with all might." 1. Man is essentially weak, and his frequent boasting of strength is but a sign of it. Adam was weak, and fell before the first assault; and now that sin, thus triumphing, has entered into our world, degenerate men are weaker still. It was when we were without strength that God laid help on One mighty to save. 2. Yet men rarely think of their weakness, and consider themselves equal to all the demands made upon them. It is only when a man receives new power that he is conscious of his weakness. It is when you try to stem a torrent that you know its force, so when a Christian begins to crucify his flesh he knows its power. But for him there is might to overcome. Yet how much weakness is manifest in professors. You see men conquered by the love of the world, and those who began well slackening their pace, and instead of resisting the allurements around them becoming entangled by them and falling into spiritual apostasy. 3. Mark the fulness of the blessing. (1) With might for all the faculties of the soul, so that every power of manhood shall be invigorated. (2) For all the wants of life created by its varied circumstances of prosperity and adversity. II. THE DIVINE PRINCIPLE MANIFESTED—"according to the power of His glory" (*Eph. iii. 16*). 1. Spiritual power, then, is not indigenous to the soul; it is from God, who alone knows its capacities and needs. If the word or smile of an earthly parent can strengthen the soul of his child, much more God. We can only influence from without, God from within. 2. The principle of this Divine action is "according," &c. Often are God's power and glory conjoined (*Psa. lxxiii. 2*; *Rev. xix. 1*). Power is an essential attribute of the Divine glory. (1) The glory of God is powerful in creation. "The heavens declare," &c. Power is everywhere apparent. Even the thoughtless, who have no eye to trace His wisdom and no heart to acknowledge His goodness, are constrained to see "His eternal power and Godhead." (2) In providence (*Psa. lxxii. 11*; *Job ix. 19*; *Dan. iv. 35*). What power in ordering times and seasons, governing a tumultuous world, restraining powers of darkness and preserving a feeble Church. (3) In redemption. Christ, who is "the brightness of His glory," is "the power of God." The exceeding greatness of His power working by His spirit accomplishes the new creation and strengthens the souls of His children. 3. The expression suggests the measure of the might imparted—not according to human power or angelic might, but according to a Divine measure. As the power of the Divine glory is manifested in nature, provi-

dence, or redemption, so will it be in the souls, experiences, and triumphs of His people. 4. It is also the model of our might. We may be strengthened with a might corresponding to the power of God's glory, so that we shall be strong in accordance with our finite nature as God is strong according to His infinite nature.

III. THE GREAT MORAL PURPOSE OF THIS STRENGTHENING—not so much to do as to suffer, which requires the greatest strength. 1. Patience has its sphere in relation to God. (1) In the endurance of trial. Our discipline is often protracted, and we are apt to sink. How much we need the promised strength. (2) In anticipation of coming good. The deliverance is long protracted. We become impatient, and ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" and impatience often leads to sin, and is always a sign of weakness. To possess our souls in patience and bide God's time requires His strength. Long-suffering has its sphere in relation to man, and means long-mindedness as opposed to shortness of temper in the midst of irritation. It requires the strength of God to imitate His forbearance who "endured such contradiction of sinners." 3. The spirit of this patience or joyfulness produced by a consciousness of power to strengthen, deliver, reward. (*J. Spence, D.D.*)

Patience.—Patience is the superintendent of all the affairs of God, and without it it is not possible to execute His commands or to wait for His promises. It defeats all its enemies without toil. Its repose is more efficacious than the movements and deeds of others. It renders those things salutary to us which, of their own nature, are most pernicious. It changes poisons into remedies, and defeats into victories. It rejoices the angels, it confounds devils, it overcomes the world. It subdues the greatest courage, and converts the most obstinate hearts. It is the strength and the triumph of the Church, according to the saying of the ancient oracle, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." (*Tertullian.*)

Patience and long-suffering.—"Long-suffering" will be found to express patience in respect of persons, and "patience" the same in respect to things. The man is long-suffering, who, having to do with injurious persons does not suffer himself easily to be provoked by them, or to blame up into anger. The man is patient who, under a great siege of trials, bears up and does not lose heart or courage (Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. i. 6). We should speak, therefore, of the long-suffering of David (2 Sam. xvi. 10-13), the patience of Job (James v. 11). Thus, while both graces are ascribed to the saints, only long-suffering is an attribute of God. Men may tempt and provoke Him, and He may and does display an infinite long-suffering in regard of them (Exod. xxxiv. 6; Rom. ii. 4; 1 Pet. iii. 20); there may be a resistance to God in men, because He respects the wills with which He has created them, even when those wills are fighting against Him. But there can be no resistance to God, nor burden upon Him, the Almighty, from things; therefore patience cannot find place in Him, nor is it ever rightly ascribed to Him; for when God is called "the God of patience" (Rom. xv. 5) this does not mean God whose attribute patience is, but God who gives patience to His people. (See also 1 Pet. v. 10; Heb. xiii. 20; Rom. xv. 13). (*Archbishop Trench.*)

The two words occur in the same context in 2 Cor. vi. 4, 6; 2 Tim. iii. 10; James v. 10-11. The difference of meaning is best seen in their opposites. While patience is the temper which does not easily succumb under suffering, long-suffering is the self-restraint that does not hastily retaliate a wrong. The one is opposed to cowardice or despondency, the other to wrath or revenge (Prov. xv. 18; xvi. 32). (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

Peace in pain.—"I have been ready to doubt," said Dr. Payson, "whether pain be really an evil; for though more pain was crowded into last week than any other week of my life, yet it was one of the happiest weeks of my life, and now I am ready to say, 'Come what will, come sickness, pain, agony, poverty, loss of friends; only let God come with them, and they shall be welcome.'" Later, on his death-bed, he said, "Every bone is almost dislocated with pain; yet while my body is thus tortured, my soul is perfectly happy and peaceful, more happy than I can possibly express to you. I seem to swim in a flood of glory which God pours down on me."

Patient long-suffering.—"I heard of a city missionary who was going along one of the streets and saw a little girl sleeping on the steps of a door, and he awoke her, and said, 'Why are you sleeping here in this drizzling rain?' And she said, 'My father has turned me out of doors. He's a drunkard, and I'm waiting till he falls asleep, and then I'm going into the house.'" The next morning the drunken father awakened from his dream of iniquity, and he saw his little girl preparing his breakfast, and he said, "Milly, why do you stay with me?"

* Oh," she said, "father, I love you; and my mother, when she died, said I must

never leave you. She said the rum fiend would sometimes go out of you, and then you would be very kind to me; and so she said I was never to leave you, and, father, I never will."

Vers. 12-14. Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet.—*The Father's gift through the Son*.—1. These grounds of thanksgiving are but various aspects of the great blessing of salvation. The diamond flashes green and purple and yellow and red, according to the angle at which its facets catch the eye. 2. All these blessings are the present possessions of Christians. 3. Note the remarkable correspondence with Acts xvi. 17-18. 1. The first ground of thankfulness which all Christians have is that THEY ARE FIT FOR THE INHERITANCE. The metaphor is drawn from Israel's "inheritance" of Canaan. Unfortunately our use of "heir" and "inheritance" is confined to succession on death. In Scripture it implies possession by lot, and points to the fact that the people did not win their land, but "God had a favour unto them." So the Christian inheritance is not won by merit, but given by God's goodness. 1. Is it present or future? Both: because whatever may wait to be revealed, the essence of all which heaven can bring is ours to-day who live in the faith and love of Christ. The difference is one of degree, not of kind. He who can say, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance" will neither leave his treasures behind by death, nor enter on a new inheritance. Its beginnings are here but as the "earnest," limited, in comparison, as the tuft of grass which used to be given to a new possessor, when set against the broad lands from which it was plucked. Here the idea is that of a present fitness for a mainly future inheritance. 2. The inheritance is "in the light," a realm where purity and knowledge and gladness dwell. 3. From this it follows that it can only be possessed by saints. There is no merit, but there is congruity. If it be a kingdom of light, then only souls who love the light can go thither, and until owls and bats rejoice in the sunshine there will be no way of being fit but by ourselves being "light in the Lord." 4. But men not perfectly pure are fit. The Colossians were made meet at their conversion. Incipient faith in Christ works a change so great as to fit us, for although it be but as a grain of mustard seed, it shapes from henceforth our personal being. There is nothing in this inconsistent with the need of continual growth in congruity. True fitness will become more and more fit. 5. The land was parted among the tribes according to their strength; some had a wider, some a narrower strip. So as there are differences of character here there will be differences in participation hereafter. "Star differeth from star." II. The second ground is THE CHANGE OF KING AND COUNTRY. In the "deliverance" there may be a reference to that of Israel suggested by "inheritance," while the "translation" may be derived from the practice of deporting whole bodies of natives from conquered kingdoms to some other part of the conqueror's realm. 1. The two kingdoms and their kings. (1) The power of darkness (Luke xxii. 18) implies harsh, arbitrary dominion, a realm of cruel and grinding sway. Men who are not Christians live in a subjection to darkness of ignorance, misery, and sin. (2) What a wonderful contrast do the other kingdom and King present! The Son who is the object of God's love. Wherever men lovingly obey Christ is His kingdom of light, gladness, hope, knowledge, and righteousness. 2. The transference of subjects. A great conqueror has come, and speaks to us as Sennacherib did to the Jews (2 Kings xviii. 31-32). If we listen He will lead us away and plant us, not as pining exiles, but as happy citizens in the kingdom which the Father has appointed. 3. The transference is effected the moment we yield our heart to Christ. When we die we shall change provinces, but not kingdoms or King, only we shall see the King in His beauty. III. The heart and centre of all thankfulness is THE REDEMPTION WE RECEIVE THROUGH CHRIST. 1. Redemption is the act of delivering a captive by ransom. So it is the same as the deliverance of the previous verse, only what is there an act of power is here an act of self-sacrificing love. Christ's death breaks the chains, sets us free, and acquires us for Himself. 2. The essential element of this redemption is forgiveness, not only the removal of legal penalties, however. The truest penalty of sin is that death which is separation from God; and the conceptions of judicial pardon and Fatherly forgiveness unite in the removal of that separation and the deliverance of the heart and conscience from the burden of guilt and a Father's wrath. 3. Such forgiveness leads to that full deliverance from the power of darkness which is the completion of redemption. Forgiveness means "sending away" not only as guilt but as habit. 4. The condition of possessing this redemption is union with Christ. "In whom." We cannot get His gifts

without Himself. 5. Redemption is a present and growing possession. "We have," or "are having." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The inheritance of the faithful:*—

1. In the spirit of "joyfulness" Paul stirs up his brethren to gratitude. 2. This gratitude was due to God. They owed much to Epaphras, Paul, and Philemon, and others. Many are the subordinate cisterns out of which all have drawn refreshing water. But the water that is there, is there only because it has been supplied from the overflow of the inexhaustible fountain above. 3. God is "The Father"; not the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, my Father, yours, or ours; but absolutely the original, archetypal fountain from which all other excellent fatherhoods are derived. Full scope is thus left to the Colossians to claim their peculiar share of the blessing laid up in the Divine Fatherhood, *e.g.*—I. MEETNESS FOR THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE. A desire is expressed that they should be led out beyond themselves. "Giving thanks to the Father who hath made" not you, not myself, Timothy and all true brethren; "us." 1. The inheritance. There are many heritages; some evil. This is "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled," &c., and thus one in heaven, "an eternal inheritance"—in one word, perfected salvation. To the heirs of this angels are ministers, and they, being "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ," are "heirs of all things," as they are Christ's and Christ is God's. 2. It is the inheritance of "the saints." There are two classes among men. The inheritance belongs to the "holy ones." 3. It is in "the light." But it belongs not only to those who are in the light, but to those who are in the dusk. 4. For this God has made us meet to be "partakers," *i.e.*, partners, sharers, which annihilates selfishness. Things are not equally distributed here, but they will be there; and even here, like an earnest of what is coming, one of the greatest of Divine boons, the light, unlike our farthing candles, is wondrously impartial. 5. For this we need "meetness," not for salvation, but for the heritage. Through sin we are disqualified. Happiness is interchangeable with holiness. Hence we need transformation. "Nothing that defileth shall enter" there. II. THE GREAT DELIVERANCE. 1. The apostle was a rescued man, and so was Timothy, and the Colossians. They had all experienced emancipation and were free. 2. The Divine Father, who feels peculiarly at home in heaven, was the Author of their freedom, as He is of all liberty. Men have sold themselves, but as His offspring they have a right to the prerogatives of children, and God has come down in the person of Jesus to make them free. 3. This rescue is from the power of darkness. (1) Men are in the dark in reference to all that was most important to their weal; as to their own nature, the character of God, and forgiveness. (2) This darkness involves the obscuration of all that is fitted to impart delight. When we are out at night we might wander in the choicest gardens, and be surrounded with enchanting scenery, but it would be utterly blank; even if we were in delightful company we should not be able to adequately appreciate it. (3) More than this is involved. Darkness means danger, and hence the Colossians had been under its "power," which is darkness personified. The idea is tyrannous power, power to do harm, because power in which malice predominates. 4. But the Great Father hath rescued us from this and translated us. (1) Paul intended a contrast between the two conditions which lie on the opposite sides of the line that is drawn by faith in Christ. The apostle delighted in this contrast, hence his frequent allusions to it—and no wonder (see Acts xxvi. 17-18). (2) They were translated, *i.e.*, transferred. The Jews were familiar with the idea. Again and again had masses of them been transported as prisoners of war. But this is a translation not into slavery and degradation, but out of them. But Paul does not say as we might expect, into "light," but into "the kingdom of God's dear Son"—the kingdom of heaven where Jesus reigns. In the expression "the Son of His love" we see what we ought to feel towards Jesus. He should be our dear sovereign, and we should "love Him, for He first loved us." (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The inheritance:*—I. HEAVEN IS AN INHERITANCE. How prone men are to attach importance to their good works, and how averse is human pride to admit that our own righteousness is as filthy rags. This arises perhaps from the feeling that if our works are destitute of merit they must disincline God to save us. But how unscriptural is this fear. One would think that the parable of the Prodigal had been invented to refute it. In spite of what has been written, and the controversies that have waxed hot on the question, the fact that heaven is an inheritance proves that it cannot be the reward of good works. II. HEAVEN IS AN HERITAGE OF FREE GRACE. We have no such legal claim to it as may be established by some earthly inheritance. Heirs have entered on the property of those between whom and them there existed no acquaintanceship. We are constituted heirs of heaven by virtue

of sonship. Thus heaven is not merely an inheritance but a home. III. THE HEIRS OF HEAVEN REQUIRE TO BE MADE MEET FOR IT. 1. No elevation from obscurity to honour, or poverty to affluence, represents the difference between a state of sin in which grace finds us and the state of glory to which it raises us. 2. What were the most tempting banquet to one without appetite, or the most beautiful scene to the blind? Just what heaven would be to man with his ruined nature, low passions, and guilty conscience. Incapable of enjoying its holy beauties and happiness, he would find nothing there to delight his senses. Such an inheritance would be like the gift of a library to a savage. 3. It is the curse of vice, that where its desires outlive the power of gratification or are denied indulgence they become a torment. What then would a drunkard do in heaven? Or a voluptuary, or a worldling? 4. Hence the need of being made new creatures in Christ; and, by reason of remaining corruption, of getting with the title to the inheritance, a greater meetness for it; of sanctification as well as salvation. It was the office of Christ to purchase heaven; it is the work of the Spirit to prepare the heirs. Thus renewed and sanctified we shall carry a holy nature to a holy place. IV. AS HEAVEN IS THE GIFT OF GOD, SO MEETNESS FOR IT IS THE WORK OF GOD. By whatever instruments God executes His work, the work is not ours but His. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) I. THE INHERITANCE. It is—1. God like-ness. Christians are partakers of the Divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4). Children inherit their father's nature; so we receive our heavenly Father's spirit, and the Divine nature is formed in us. We are conformed to the image of God's Son, who is the image of the invisible God in gentleness, beneficence, and perfectness of character. 2. Eternal life. This is no blessedness to the wicked, for it is continuance in sin and misery; for the righteous it is everlasting holiness and happiness. 3. Heaven. It is pleasant to think of heaven as a state, much more so as a place—home. II. THIS INHERITANCE CANNOT BE MERITED. 1. All the riches of the earth cannot buy it, nor all its valour win it. "Worthy is the Lamb . . . for Thou hast redeemed us." 2. It is our Father's gift. He is not like Jacob, who selected a favourite son. The inheritance is offered to all. 3. It is meant purposely for the children. Some men die without a will, but God has made special provision for us. 4. It has been purchased by the death of Christ. III. THE INHERITORS. "Saints in light." 1. They see the love of God. Some may ask of their professed lovers, "do you love me?" But the saints in light do not need to ask this question of God. 2. They are eternal realities, which to others seem as dreams. (*W. Birch.*) *What is inheritance?*—The pay of a soldier is not inheritance, nor the fees of a physician, nor the gains of trade, nor the wages of labour. Rewards of toil or skill are earned by the hands that receive them. What is inherited, on the other hand, may be the property of a new-born babe; and so you may see the coronet, which was won by the stout arm of valour, and first blazoned on a battered shield, standing above the cradle of an infant. True, the ample estate, the noble rank, the hereditary honours were won. But they that won them are long dead, and underneath tattered banners, once borne before them in bloody fight, but now hung high in the house of God, the grim old barons sleep in their tombs. The rewards of their prowess have descended to their successors, who, holding these, enjoy honours and estates, which we do not grudge them, but which their wealth never bought, and their courage never won. Thus the saints hold heaven. In the terms of law, it is theirs, not by conquest but inheritance. It has been won for them by Jesus Christ. (*T. Guthrie.*) *The inheritance not the reward of merit:*—When one of the kings of England said to the assembled barons, "By what right hold ye your lands?" they stepped forward before the king, and, drawing their swords, exclaimed, "By these we hold our lands." But no deeds of ours can obtain and hold the inheritance of the saints in light. When the first Napoleon had made himself Emperor, and was about to be crowned, the Roman Pontiff approached him bearing the crown; but Napoleon reached out his hand, took the crown, and himself placed it upon his head; then he stood up before the assembled multitude, as if to say, "My own arm hath won the victory, and my own courage hath lifted me to this position." But in our case, which of us can earn the inheritance of the saints in light? If our celestial position depended on our merits, I fear many of us would never get through the gate of the city of the saints. (*W. Birch.*) *The inheritance of light:*—1. Turn from your inheritance of tears, anxiety, transitory stewardship; and you who have an inheritance of fame, respectability, &c., and lift up your eyes to the inheritance of light. 2. We have here an expression incomprehensible to many, but comprehended by a new illumination; as a bird of

the greenwood may comprehend freedom, an antelope the wide wilderness, a creature of the waters its native seas. Thus not only by original but informed instinct do we comprehend the inheritance. 3. The text stands in contrast to that other inheritance from whence we have been delivered—the power of darkness, beneath whose sway we all were born, and familiarity with which enables us to appreciate the inheritance of light. We have heard of the salt mines of Cracow, where human beings labour and never see the eyes of the sun. To one born there how strange the stories of the upper world. It is a picture of the human heart without the Saviour; its faculties are all like spars and crystals in a cavern, and how hearty its rapture when it surveys its new world, and is made meet for the inheritance. 4. It is a purchased and promised possession, and is ours neither by purchase nor conquest. How could we, born in caves of darkness, have battled our way up to the terraces of light? How have passed through opposing hosts of darkness, and entered within the shining enclosures? 5. What is it? We can understand a human inheritance, park and mansion. The inheritance of light is our true and real being; pure vision; the insight of a holy nature. It represents a perfect union of the nature and the state. The mind and heart are full of light, and the light within creates light around. This is heaven; the residence of God who “is light,” and of His people who are “the children of light.” Even on earth we are able, in a degree, to rise to it. We know the light within, without, and beyond, and their respective glories. (*Paxton Hood.*) *The inheritance of the saints*:—I. THE INHERITANCE. 1. It is our common state, just as there is a common salvation. An earthly inheritance is impaired by division, but here the number of possessors really adds to the happiness of the individual partaker. Though one star differeth from another in glory, all shine. 2. How shall we estimate the inheritance? Compared with this what is that of the worldling, of the Jews in Canaan, of Adam before the fall, of the angels? Angels can never know the pleasures of reconciliation. 3. What are we to think of the state of blessedness that is intended to display the value of that blood which purchased it? 4. The possessors are saints, holy beings, for “without holiness no man can see the Lord.” They are partakers of God’s holiness, but are encompassed with infirmities till they join “the spirits of just men made perfect;” then they will be presented “faultless before the throne.” 5. The region. Hell is darkness, and so is the world. But the Church is light, and its members children of the light. And yet while here they are only able to survey the glimmering of the day. Now they walk by faith, mistake appearances for realities, are baffled in their inquiries, unable to discern their privileges and true friends. But it will not be always so, for heaven is all light—perfect, endless light. II. THE MEETNESS FOR IT. Man is both guilty and depraved. Two things are necessary for his restoration—justification and sanctification, the one delivering from condemnation, the other bringing us into communion with God; the one is a change of our state, the other of our nature; the one is derived from Christ’s righteousness, and is instantaneous; the other from the Holy Spirit and is gradual. The one gives us a title to our inheritance, the other gives us meetness for it. 1. The nature of this meetness. The renewing of the Holy Spirit; giving us new views, principles, and habitudes. How is a man made meet for any earthly station? Take a youth: he is apprenticed, begins with the elementary parts and rises to the more difficult, till he reaches the knowledge of the whole, and then launches away for himself. A child learns to walk by walking; a musician learns to play by playing. So we are made meet for heaven by doing its work and enjoying its pleasures now. The work of heaven is to praise and serve God, and its happiness to be in communion with Him. This we enjoy now. 2. Its necessity. A man suddenly gains a fortune for which he is not qualified; the consequence is that “the prosperity of fools destroys them.” The French, living so long under tyranny, were not prepared for the sudden enjoyment of liberty, and so ran mad. The higher the destination of a man, the more he needs meetness. God does not exclude the unregenerate from heaven, they exclude themselves. “Except a man be born again,” &c. The impossibility does not arise from God’s decree, but from the nature of things. The devil would be a torment to himself in heaven. Happiness does not arise merely from the excellence of the object, but from being right suited to it. 3. The author of it is God. The very operation shows this, “He that wrought us for this selfsame thing is God,” &c. If we are a “building” we are “His workmanship;” if fruitful, “in Him is our fruit found;” if a tree, “of His planting.” 4. Its sureness—“bath made us.” III. THE PRAISE. “Giving thanks.” This is—1. Deserved. God has infinite claims

on our gratitude. 2. Distinguishing; more for spiritual than temporal mercies. 3. Practical. "Thanksgiving is good; thanks-living is better." 4. Never ending (*W. Jay.*) *The inheritance of the saints*.—I. AN INTERESTING VIEW OF THE FUTURE WORLD AS INHERITED BY BELIEVERS. There are many such views in Scripture; here it is described as "light," indicating a place of splendour. Light arrays all nature with beauty. 2. Of ceaseless activity. Darkness and sleep are related. "There shall be no night there," but a busy array of spirits which never grows languid, noble exercise which will never end. 3. Of purity. Darkness is an emblem of sin; light of holiness. Evil covets darkness, courts error to stifle conscience, which will work when in the light. A soul desirous of holiness comes to the light, that its deeds, if evil, may be corrected; and if good, be manifested that they are wrought in God. Here our holiness is imperfect, but in heaven the Church is "without spot." There we shall never sin through ignorance, or fail of duty. 4. Of permanent felicity. Night is an emblem of affliction; light of gladness. Sorrow courts the night, joy the day; and the vicissitudes of day and night are emblematical. Our blessings have their dawn, noon, and setting. But the saints are in eternal light, where no sickness blasts, no death devours, no injustice grinds, &c., and where no depression abates spiritual enjoyments, and no temptation clouds the sun of heavenly manifestations. The permanency of holiness gives permanency to bliss. 5. Of knowledge. We come out of darkness into marvellous light, but still we see through a glass darkly. The illuminated circle about us is enveloped in haze. Into the mightier plans of God even piety would humbly pry. Into the difficulties of some great doctrines we are sometimes urged to look. How many Bible texts are obscure, and is there one of which we see the fulness? Who would not have the mystery of his little life unfolded, and all prophecy converted into history, and, above all, rise to a nearer vision of God? But there we shall know as we are known. II. THE MEETNESS WROUGHT BY GOD IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO ARE RAISED TO THE ENJOYMENT OF THIS INHERITANCE. 1. A relative meetness expressed by "inheritance." Our natural heirship is forfeited by sin. Redemption has brought it back; but we become heirs by becoming children, and we are made children by the faith which secures for us the blessing of justification. Till this there is no meetness of relation. 2. Personal meetness. "Saints." There is a correspondence between a hallowed state and heaven. A man who has a distaste for God's service cannot enjoy the worship day and night for ever. The man who shuns the light of truth could not bear the eternal light of God's countenance. The lover of pleasure could not relish its spiritual joys. 3. This meetness is the work of God. 4. Give thanks to Him for it in others and in yourself. (*R. Watson.*) *Meetness for heaven*.—I. THE MEETNESS. The subject excludes natural meetness: the only natural meetness man has is for hell, for the sinner has in him all the elements of it. Meetness for heaven refers—1. To the renewal of the Holy Spirit. Heaven is the abode of the holy, and man must be partaker of a nature which corresponds with the purity and enjoyment of heaven (*Eph. v. 5; Rev. xxi. 27; John iii. 3.*) 2. To the atoning work of Jesus. The meetness of the title, justification by faith. 3. To the adoption of the believer. God has made him a son, and so an heir. 4. To all God's disciplinary dealings with His people which are to meeten them for heaven. II. THE INHERITANCE. 1. Heaven is our inheritance. (1) For which we are destined (*Eph. i. 11*); (2) which has been purchased by Christ (*Heb. ix. 15*); (3) which is "incorruptible," &c. (*1 Pet. i. 4*); (4) and of which we have the earnest here. (5) Its vastness and illimitability is unfolded in *Rev. xxi. 7*. 2. Whose this inheritance is, (1) Who are the saints? Fanatics, says the world; the baptized, say the Tractarians; the Lord's holy ones, says the Bible, washed in Christ's blood, renewed by and possessing God's Spirit. (2) They are saints in light, which may refer—(a) to themselves as children of the light, who have the light of truth and holiness without which intellectual or moral excellence is vain; (b) or to the glorified saints in their present abode, which is the dwelling of Him who is "Light, and no darkness at all," the place of perfect purity and knowledge of which light is the symbol (*Isa. lx. 19; Rev. xxii. 5, xxi. 23*). 3. The saints are "partakers" of this inheritance. They have it already with all the saints of God, in foretaste and antepast. III. THE PRECEPT based upon the subject. "Giving thanks." 1. To whom the grateful acknowledgment is made—"the Father." Heaven is the Father's gift. 2. On what grounds. (1) The provision of a Saviour. (2) The enjoying of the preparing Spirit. (3) The prepared inheritance. (4) The upholding power which brings us safely to the inheritance. Conclusion: 1. Cultivate an habitual, growing meet-

ness. Be not satisfied with present attainments. 2. Look upon all the Lord's covenant dealings with you as only preparatory to your approaching emancipation from all sin and sorrow. 3. Let the subject cheer you in bereavement. (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) *Meetness for the saintly inheritance*.—The Epistle has been hitherto occupied with prefatory observations. Here Paul enters upon his principal theme. I. THE OPULENT INHERITANCE PROVIDED FOR THE GOOD. 1. It is a present and prospective possession. (1) The saints even now "walk in the light as He is in the light." They have a measure of knowledge, but it is dimmed by many obscurities: of purity, but it is surrounded with imperfections: of joy, but it is moderated by sorrows. The prospective knowledge shall be unclouded, purity unsullied, joy uninterrupted. 2. It is a possession provided for the good. Not for the impenitent, the worldly. It is an inheritance where only the pure in heart can dwell. 3. It is a possession freely given. The legal heir has no need to work for his inheritance: he enters by right of succession, or testatorial bequest. The saint enters upon his inheritance of righteousness, not by natural descent, or self-constituted right. II. THE SPECIAL MEETNESS FOR THE INHERITANCE. This is—1. Absolutely necessary. A monarch can raise the barest slave to a dukedom, but he cannot give him fitness for its duties. He may change his state, but cannot change his nature. 2. Consists in the loving conformity of the human will to the Divine. The celestial spirits find their highest glory and blessedness in this. 3. Is a Divine work. (1) God provides the inheritance, gives the title, confers the moral fitness. None but the Almighty Father could do this. III. THE DUTY WE OWE TO THE GENEROUS DONOR. Gratitude. 1. Practical. 2. Fervent. 3. Constant. (*G. Barlow.*) *Meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light*.—1. It is the special glory of the gospel that it first distinctly enlarged the prospects of men into the depths of eternity; it first authoritatively taught us that the present existence is the meanest portion of our inheritance, and thus changed for ever the whole science of life. 2. Life for eternity is already begun: from the hour of our regeneration we are introduced into the spiritual world. The Christian's life of heavenliness is the first stage of heaven. The doctrine of the New Testament is not that men now wholly mortal, shall hereafter, in reward of fidelity, be miraculously raised to die no more; but that "he that hath the Son hath life." There is a power now within the Christian of which his celestial immortality shall be the proper fruit. 3. Therefore men must not only win heaven as a reward, but be suited to it as a life. Men may reckon on easy pardon, but they cannot suppress dismay if they reflect that pardon itself, were it possible, would be vain as long as the pardoned sinner were unfit for the society of heaven. Such a pardon could but aggravate the keen sense of hopeless, irremediable misery. What we are to be in heaven we must be on earth. 4. We are under a course of education for heaven; the life of heaven then must be practised on earth, if the child of God would learn his profession for eternity. Heaven is the model on which we are to reconstruct our nature. The inheritance for which we are made meet is to determine and regulate the whole course of our present existence. 5. But here arises a difficulty. We know so little of this pattern. Then we know little of the details—the abodes in which we shall dwell, the companions with whom we shall rejoice, the bodies we shall wear; but the principles of that life, these are clear and undisputable, as *e.g.*, that the business and beatitude of heaven must consist in conformity to the will of God. 6. This, then, the great characteristic of heaven, must be equally the law of the earth. The habit must be ours, not merely of acting from higher principles than self-interest or passion, but of acting exclusively from obedience to the known appointment of God. All other motives, however attractive, are of the earth earthy. 7. Here, then, is the charge that religion brings against the world. It is not that the world does not abound in manifestations of moral as well as physical beauty, but that all that is excellent in the natural man is excellent irrespective of his God. No virtue but godliness; no excellence but that which tends to God; no rule of life but that which trains for God can ever be the virtue, or affection, or rule fitted for a creature travelling to God's own eternity. 8. Contrast, then, this sole abiding principle of eternal happiness with the life around us. We shall exclude open and allowed vice, and come among the amiabilities and noblenesses of our social life. That the adulterer and the thief should disclaim subjection to God is not surprising; but the depth and universality of the rebellion is seen in the vast spheres of human excellence into which God never enters; in the amiability which loves all but God; in the self-devotion that never surrenders one gratification for the sake of God. How conspicuously is this often seen in family affection. 9. How, then, shall this

meekness be wrought? Solely by cultivating affections that rest in heaven and God, and by devoting our earthly affections not merely as their own instinctive impulses lead, but also in felt and constant conformity to His appointment. 10. Faith, hope, and love are the instruments which, gradually uniting the heart to the spiritual world and its Lord, separate it from earth, predispose it for heaven, win the will to His service, and train the soul for the fellowship and heritage of the saints. These are the habits that must be attained, or heaven is hopeless. 11. What are the specific functions of these preparatory graces. (1) Faith is the realizing power. Its office is to make us see the unseen, to be the visual sense of the Spirit of God. Beholding God even now around us, it prepares for heaven, by already habituating to the presence of heaven's Master. (2) Hope is the consoling and fortifying power. She prepares for heaven by maintaining the constant desire and expectation of its promised enjoyments. (3) But love is the uniting power, the perfection of all. In its highest degrees it is not so much preparation for heaven as heaven already begun; for we know of nothing more perfect in heaven than the fulness of loving God. Hence "Love never faileth." It makes the commandments "not grievous" here, and thus prepares for a state where their fulfilment shall be supreme delight. (*W. A. Butler, M.A.*) *The joy of light*:—In one of our northern coal-pits there was a little boy employed in a lonely and dangerous part of the mine. One day a visitor to the coal-pit asked the boy about his work, and the child answered, "Yes, it is very lonely here, but I pick up the little bits of candle thrown away by the colliers, and join them together, and when I get a light I sing." (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *Meekness for heaven*:—A pious military officer desirous to ascertain what were the real feelings and views of a dying soldier, whom he had been instrumental in bringing to the truth, said, "William, I am going to ask you a strange question. Suppose you could carry your sins with you to heaven, would that satisfy you?" The poor dying lad replied, with a most affecting smile, "Why, sir, what sort of a heaven would that be to me? It would be just like a pig in a parlour." "I need not add," continues the officer, "that he was panting after a heaven of holiness, and was convinced that if he died in sin he would be quite out of his element in a heaven of purity. (*W. Bazendale.*) *Meekness for the inheritance*:—We are so far meet that we are accepted in the Beloved, adopted into the family, and fitted by Divine approbation to dwell with the saints in light. There is a woman chosen to be a bride; she is fitted to be married, fitted to enter into the honourable state and condition of matrimony; but at present she has not on the bridal garment, she is not like the bride adorned for her husband. You do not see her yet robed in her elegant attire, with her ornaments upon her, but you know she is fitted to be a bride, she is received and welcomed as such in the family of her destination. So Christ has chosen His Church to be married to Him; she has not yet put on her bridal garment, and all that beautiful array in which she shall stand before the Father's throne, but notwithstanding, there is such a fitness in her to be the bride of Christ, when she shall have bathed herself for a little while, and lain for a little while in the bed of spices—there is such a fitness in her character, such a grace-given adaptation in her to become the royal bride of her glorious Lord, and to become a partaker of the enjoyments of bliss—that it may be said of the Church as a whole, and of every member of it, that they are "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." The Greek word, moreover, bears some such meaning as this, though I cannot give the exact idiom, it is always difficult when a word is not used often. This word is only used twice, that I am aware of, in the New Testament. The word may be employed for "suitable," or, I think, "sufficient." "He hath made us meet"—sufficient—"to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." But I cannot give my idea without borrowing another figure. When a child is born, it is at once endowed with all the faculties of humanity. If those powers are wanting at first, they will not come afterwards. It has eyes, it has hands, it has feet, and all its physical organs. These of course are as it were in embryo. The senses though perfect at first, must be gradually developed, and the understanding gradually matured. It can see but little, it cannot discern distances; it can hear, but it cannot hear distinctly enough at first to know from what direction the sound comes; but you never find a new leg, a new arm, a new eye, or a new ear growing on that child. Each of these powers will expand and enlarge, but still there is the whole man there at first, and the child is sufficient for a man. Let but God in His infinite providence cause it to feed, and give it strength and increase, it has sufficient for manhood. It does not want either arm or leg, nose or ear; you cannot make it

grow a new member; nor does it require a new member either; all are there. In like manner, the moment a man is regenerated, there is every faculty in his new creation that there shall be, even when he gets to heaven. It only needs to be developed and brought out: he will not have a new power, he will not have a new grace, he will have those which he had before, developed and brought out. Just as we are told by the careful observer, that in the acorn there is in embryo every root and every bough and every leaf of the future tree, which only requires to be developed and brought out in their fulness; so, in the true believer, there is a sufficiency or meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. All that he requires is, not that a new thing should be implanted, but that which God has put there in the moment of regeneration, shall be cherished and nurtured, and made to grow and increase, till it comes unto perfection and he enters into "the inheritance of the saints in light." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Unmeetness for the inheritance*:—I knew a man who had amassed great wealth; but had no children to inherit it. Smitten, however, with the strange propensity to found a house, he left his riches to a distant relative. His successor found himself suddenly raised from poverty to affluence, and thrown into a position he had not been trained to fill. He was cast into the society of those to whose tastes and habits and accomplishments he was an utter and awkward stranger. Did many envy this child of fortune? They might have spared their envy. Left in his original obscurity he had been a happy peasant, whistling his way home from the plough to a thatched cottage, or on winter nights, around the blazing faggots, laughing loud and merry among unpolished boors. Child of misfortune! He buried his happiness in the grave of his benefactor. Neither qualified by nature nor fitted by education for his position, he was separated from his old, only to be despised by his new, associates. And how bitterly was he disappointed to find that, in exchanging poverty for opulence, daily toil for luxurious indolence, humble friends for more distinguished companions, a hard bed for one of down, this turn in his fortunes had flung him on a couch, not of roses, but of thorns! In his case, the hopes of the living and the intentions of the dead were alike frustrated. The prize had proved a blank; a necessary result of this fatal oversight, that the heir had not been made meet for the inheritance. Is such training needful for an earthly estate? How much more for heaven. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The saints in light*:—Light! The shadows of a temporary dispensation shall have passed away, and the whole plan of the Creator's dealings be spread before the admiring saints, one blaze of beauty. Light! The discrepancies of Providence, the seeming contradictions in God's government of the universe, the obscurities which are caused by knowing only in part—all this shall have been removed, and no dark spot be left behind. Light! It shall not be the brilliancy of the material sun which makes the future landscape indescribably radiant: "the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of the Lord doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Light! The saints themselves purged from all that is corruptible, the purified soul in the imperishable body, shall be wondrously luminous. Even here, as St. Paul expresses it, they "shine as lights in the world," but hereafter, perfectly conformed to the image of Christ, of whom we are told that at His transfiguration, which exhibited what glorified humanity shall be, "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light," they shall be conspicuous among all orders of intelligence transformed into glowing, beaming likenesses of Him whose irradiations occupy the universe. "Light," said the Psalmist, "is sown for the righteous;" and the seeds, we may add, of the glorious harvest are deposited in our souls whilst working out our own salvation. Holiness is the moral light, and the germ of heavenly purity is the element of heavenly splendour. Be it now, then, our endeavour to walk as children of light, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. There must be—we press this again and again on your attention—there must be a correspondence between the scene and the creature. The inheritance is one of light; therefore the heir also, in the words of St. Paul, must be "light in the Lord." We will aim, then, God being our help, so to improve the state of discipline, that casting off the ignorance and corruption in which we are naturally enveloped, we may at length be placed with those righteous men of whom Christ said, "They shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (*H. Melville, D.D.*)

Vers. 13, 14. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.—*The great moral translation*:—I. INVOLVES OUR ENFRANCHISEMENT FROM A STATE OF DARK ACTIVITIES. 1. The unrenewed are in a realm of moral darkness. (1) Darkness denotes

ignorance—moral blindness about the great mysteries of being, of sin and suffering, the deep significance of life. It is possible to know much about religion, to hold religious ideas at second hand; yet be totally in the dark as to the experience of those ideas. (2) Darkness denotes danger and misery. 2. In this realm the unrenewed are held in captivity. 3. From this realm God graciously liberates. "Who hath delivered us." (1) For the slaves of sin there is no help but in God. It is the nature of sin to incapacitate its victim for self-enfranchisement. He is unwilling to be free. (2) The word "deliver" means to snatch, or rescue from danger, even though the person seized may at first be unwilling to escape, as Lot from Sodom. God does not force the human will. (3) Our enfranchisement may be painful. II. PLACES US IN A CONDITION OF HIGHEST MORAL FREEDOM AND PRIVILEGE. 1. We are transferred to a kingdom. "Hath translated us into the kingdom." Power detains captives; a kingdom fosters willing citizens. Tyranny has no law but the will of a despot; a kingdom implies good government, based on law. The kingdom of God has an earthly and heavenly aspect, both of which are governed by one and the same sceptre. It resembles a city divided by a river, but both parts controlled by the same municipal authority, and having one common franchise. There is no middle state between the power of darkness and the kingdom of grace: all who breathe are either in the one or the other. 2. We are placed under the rule of a beneficent and glorious King. "The Son of His love." The manifestation of Christ is the manifestation of Divine love (1 John iv. 9). The kingdom into which believers are translated is founded on love: its entire government is carried on by love. The acts of suffering and death, by which Christ won his kingly dignity, were revelations of love. Under such a monarch we are sure of protection, guidance, support, and final victory. III. IS EFFECTED BY "REDEMPTION." 1. The means. "Through His blood." 2. The effects. 3. The Author. (*G. Barlow.*) *The great spiritual change:—*I. THE MOMENTOUS CHANGE. 1. Is from the power of darkness. Darkness is thus personified as a monarch, not a mere force. Under this the Colossians were living till they received the gospel. Neither the light of their Gentile philosophy nor the fitful course of their culture could rescue them. The very light that was in them was darkness. This is the condition of all men naturally. Darkness is—(1) Ignorance. Men are ignorant of God and themselves (1 Cor. ii. 14). They may learn lessons of God's power and wisdom in creation, admire the literature and poetry of revelation, and believe in a future state; but they have no true knowledge of their moral condition, of God as their Father, Christ as their Saviour, or of the blessedness of holiness. (2) It leads to error. In the absence of light the traveller mistakes his way. Men think they are in the road to heaven as they wander up and down the bye-paths of religious formality, of their own resolutions, or of some superstition. Deluded by this darkness they make no effort to live for God and work out their own salvation. (3) Such a condition must be one of danger. The belated traveller cannot distinguish friend from foe, land from water. Unconscious of peril, and perhaps thinking of home, he draws near a precipice, falls over and is killed. (4) Darkness promotes discomfort and fear. There is a gloomy uncertainty and dread of the future, a bondage of the soul through the fear of death. He cannot be happy who knows not God as his Friend, and has no meetness for the future. 2. The process of deliverance. (1) It may involve not a little that is painful. To a man soundly asleep the sudden cry of "fire" is not welcome. So this deliverance involves a distressing inward struggle and the abandonment of many a pleasure. (2) Whither is the delivered soul brought? He is not rescued and left to wander in search of a home, but has a title and guidance to the kingdom of God's Son. (a) This kingdom is so called because it belongs to Him by right, who founded, formed, and rules over it. (b) Something of its character may be learned from His: the Son of God's love (John iii. 35). Who can tell the peace and blessedness of those subjects on whom God's boundless love rests. 3. This deliverance is the most important and wonderful event in a man's history. It is a present privilege and prepares for, and is a pledge of the future inheritance. 4. It is exclusively the work of God. II. THE DIVINE MEANS FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS END. 1. A putting forth of power on the part of the deliverer manifested by the mediation of Christ. Although the words, "through His blood," are not found in the earlier MSS., and may have been borrowed from Eph. i. 7; yet the text involves their meaning. Men are sold under sin and condemned; from this state deliverance comes by redemption; redemption implies a price paid; the ransom is the precious blood of Christ. In His Cross there was a vindication of God's righteousness and power to rescue from sin (1 Peter iii. 18, ii. 14; Gal. iii. 13;

Eph. v. 2). 2. This redemption is "in Christ." His blood was the ransom, but He is the Redeemer, and it is only in living union with Him that we can receive its blessing. Just as we rest and walk in Him have we evidence that we are amongst the redeemed. 3. It is easy to see how this redemption must, in effect, be the raising of the soul to obedience and purity (2 Cor. v. 17). The blessing characteristic of redemption: forgiveness. This—(1) is its first blessing (Romans v. 1). (2) Its most urgent and momentous blessing. (3) The most direct, flowing immediately from Christ and reaching us directly through His expiation. (4) The blessing which opens the way for all others. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Redemption:—I. Who? The Father.* And no one else ought to, or could, deliver man, but God. 1. None other ought, because (as Tertullian observes) "by this act he would forcibly take away from the Creator His own servant." For so great is this benefit of deliverance, that it binds us more than the benefit of creation. 2. But neither could any other deliver. For he must necessarily be stronger than the devil who could wrest his prey from him (Matt. xii. 29). But who could overcome and bind this prince of darkness except the mighty God alone? It was He, therefore, who plucked us from him. II. Whom, or what sort of persons God delivered? And this consideration may be twofold. 1. Of those who were to be delivered. Previous to our deliverance we were not only diseased and weak, but opposed to our own deliverance (Rom. v.). (1) Observe the immeasurable love of God, who would deliver such persons: for no one cares to redeem a thing of no value. (2) The infinite power of God who delivered man in spite of the devil. 2. As to those who have been delivered; after that they are faithful and holy, who before were rebels and unholy. "Us" refers to verses 4-6. Hence it is manifest—(1) The dreams of carnal men of deliverance are vain. The Israelites, while serving Pharaoh and lusting after the fleshpots, were not in the enjoyment of liberty; so Christians while obeying the devil and delighting in sin are not delivered. (2) Hence, also, we infer for the consolation of the godly that they alone are free; the ungodly, although they glitter in the eyes of men, are slaves. III. FROM WHAT? The power of darkness. 1. From the power of the devil who is the prince of darkness. We all are born under his kingdom, so that he worketh in us according to his own will. But this prince of darkness is bruised under the feet of the faithful (Rom. xvi. 20), to whom, by the Spirit of God, new strength is administered to trample upon this unclean spirit. 2. From the power of sin, which hath blinded the understanding, corrupted the will, and placed us in a condition of darkness both as to knowledge and to spiritual and saving practice (Eph. v. 8; John i. 5, iii. 19). Now from this darkness God has rescued us. He pours in the light of faith and imparts the Spirit of holiness; which blessings being bestowed, this power and dominion of sin is dissolved (Rom. vi. 14). 3. From the power of hell, i.e., from the miseries and calamities which arise from the guilt of reigning sin. From the power of this they are delivered by the Divine mercy (Rom. viii. 1). Observe—(1) For instruction. The whole world is involved in darkness under the devil, neither is there a spark of saving light before deliverance; for we are in "the power of darkness." (2) For caution. The redeemed ought to have no fellowship with the works of darkness; for they are rescued from the power of the devil and of sin, and, therefore, by serving these they show themselves to be deserters (Rom. xiii. 12). (3) For consolation. Although the godly are often troubled yet they are delivered from a misery compared with which all external evils are trifling. IV. TO WHAT? 1. The nature of the translation. (1) The word is borrowed from those who plant colonies and compel persons to migrate to inhabit some new region. So God has translated us from the kingdom of darkness, which is the native soil of us all. (2) How hath He translated us? We may understand that from the context. God translates us when He illuminates our hearts by pouring into them faith, when He changes our will by imparting grace; for, being enlightened and sanctified, a man is by that very act translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His Son; because He cannot possibly be at the same time a citizen of two cities which observe contrary laws. Here observe, To be delivered it is not enough that we be called to this kingdom, and admonished to desert that other. (3) Therefore He is to be regarded with the highest honour, for so colonies are accustomed to regard their founder. 2. What is intended by this word kingdom? The Kingdom of God, Christ, heaven. (1) Is put for the state of glory (Matt. vi. 33; 1 Cor. vi. 9). This the saints have by right, and hope, but not in possession. (2) For the promulgation and knowledge of the gospel (Matt. xiii. 11; xxi. 43). But this the saints have only in common with other professors. (3) For a state of grace, remission of sins, renovation, and Divine favour on account

of Christ, the Mediator; and for the whole multitude of those who are in this state (Luke xviii. 21; Rom. xiv. 17). I deem this to be the proper sense of this expression. 3. Why the apostle calls it the kingdom of the Son, and not of heaven, or of light. Because—(1) God admits no one to it except through His Son as Mediator. He is the channel of grace. Through Him its streams flow to us, and we are planted in the kingdom (Eph. i. 3, 8). (2) Christ, the Mediator, received it from the Father to govern it to the end of time (Luke xxii. 29). (3) Paul wished to open the way and make an easy transition for discoursing on the person of the Son. For he immediately enters upon that doctrine, which he could not so aptly have proceeded to unless he had expressly named the Son. (4) Christ is rightly called the Son of the Father's love, because He hath the Father's whole and entire love communicated to Him, even as He had His essence. This is a great consolation to the godly man, when he calls to mind that he is not merely a subject, but a member of Christ so beloved of God. For hence he derives the hope of obtaining from God whatever is necessary to salvation. (*Bp. Davenant.*)

I. MAN IS NOW IN SOUL MISERY. 1. Naturally. We are children of wrath by nature. 2. Judicially. We are under condemnation. 3. Universally. Soul death hath passed over all men. **II. MAN NEEDS DELIVERANCE.** 1. We are sensible enough of bodily misery, but insensible to soul misery; yet the former is but to make us sensible of the latter. 'Tis God pulling the rope without to make the bell speak within. 2. Without our sense of the need of deliverance, that deliverance will never come. 3. What temporal and eternal horrors are there for the unsaved. **III. MAN MAY BE DELIVERED.** Christ "snatched" souls out of darkness and danger. 1. He moves strongly to save. Snatching speaks an act of force; Christ overturns all that stands in His way when He puts forth to deliver a soul. 2. He moves swiftly to save. Snatching notes swift motion. There is but a step between hell and that soul that is under the power of darkness; what, therefore, is done must be done speedily or the soul is lost. 3. Christ moves thoroughly to save. Snatching, speaks a full assuming of that which was wholly another's. That which I snatch from my enemy in war is wholly mine own, and Christ, having plucked us out of the hands of Satan, claims us as his own. 4. Christ moves preventingly. Snatching speaks an act unthought of, force surprising, the surprised dreaming nothing. Christ catcheth sinners in a dead sleep. Soldiers are sometimes so caught; the devil's soldiers are all so. 5. Christ moves ravishingly. This is love smiling, and the soul is taken. **IV. THE DELIVERED.** 1. Love the Redeemer. 2. Obey Him. (*N. Lockyer, M.A.*)

The power of darkness:—I. Look at the STATE OF NATURE AND SIN AS ONE OF DARKNESS. Sin is as opposed to holiness as darkness is to light, and as different from holiness as midnight from noonday. Our state by nature is one of double darkness. We have neither light nor sight. That we may be saved we require two things—a medium to see by, and eyes to see with; the revelation of the gospel, and regeneration of the Holy Spirit; Christ as an object for faith to see, faith as an eye to see Christ. As inhabitants of a Christian land we already possess one of these. There is fulness of light, and yet multitudes are wrecked and perish, and unless He, who gave sight to the blind, touch your eyes their fate will be yours. There are animals that are born blind; but after a few days their eyelids are unsealed and they are delivered from the power of darkness. But not ten years will do for us such friendly office. Not that we shall be always blind. Eternity opens the darkest eyes, but when too late, "He lift up his eyes, being in torment." 1. Darkness is a state of indolence. Night is the proper period for rest. Yet in its hours of darkness and repose, this city presents no true picture of our state by nature. We see it where a city sleeps, while eager angels point Lot's eyes to the break of day, and urge his tardy steps through the doomed streets of Sodom. Rouse thee, then, and betake thee to the Saviour. The plague of Egyptian darkness is, perhaps, the best illustration. "They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days." Many a man has not risen from his place for ten times three years and more. He is no nearer heaven than he was long, long ago. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." 2. Darkness is a state of ignorance. Ugliness and beauty, friend and foe, are all one in the dark, and so are the solid ground and the yawning precipice. Many a gallant ship has perished in a fog, and many a sinner in guilty ignorance. The greatest of mistakes is to miss the path of heaven, and yet how many, turning from Christ, are missing it? Some think that their charities and duties will save them; others a routine of outward services; others that they may go on a little longer in sin and then turn. 3. Darkness is a state of danger. (1) As locks and bars prove neither life nor property is safe at night. The prowling thief, the hiding

assassin, the gaudy tempter are but types of the great enemy who takes advantage of spiritual darkness to ruin sinners. (2) Such danger is there in darkness that people have perished almost at their own doors : and many die at the gate of salvation, and by the very door of heaven (2 Cor. iv. 4). (3) In respect of its power over men what can be compared to mental, moral, and spiritual darkness? (a) Look at Popery! She immures her votaries in a gloomier dungeon than ever held her victims. God sends them His blessed Word, but they dare not open it; and, greatest triumph of darkness, they refuse instruction. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?" (b) But how many among ourselves lie under the delusion that though the happiness they seek in the world has eluded their grasp, they will yet embrace the mocking phantom! How many are putting away the claims of Christ and their souls to a more convenient season? Many fancy themselves safe who are ready to perish. II. EVEN GOD'S PEOPLE REMAIN IN MORE OR LESS DARKNESS, SO LONG AS THEY ARE HERE. 1. They may be in darkness through ignorance. (1) Having abandoned the works of darkness, and "become children of light," yet all do not enjoy the same measure of light, nor possess equal powers of sight; hence those conflicting views which have separated brother from brother. (2) While some saints enjoy a clear assurance of their salvation, others pass their days in despondency. By the help of God's Word, their compass, they succeed in steering their way to heaven, but it is over a troubled sea, and under a cloudy sky. 2. They may be in darkness through sin. So long as you walk in the path of God's commandments you walk in the light; but in turning aside from that we have withdrawn from it. He that descends into a pit leaves the light, not the light him. And the deeper the saint sinks in sin, the darker it grows. God will not smile on His child sinning; and that which would befall our world were the sun withdrawn befalls his soul; a chilling cold follows on the darkness, and but for restoring grace death would ensue. 3. They may be in more or less darkness as to their spiritual state. It is easy to account for such a case as David's; but there are cases of religious desertion that do not admit of being thus explained. Hear that "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." In such cases, however, God does not leave you comfortless. You may retain your hold when you lose your sight of Him; and the sun, which has struggled through clouds all day long, often breaks forth into golden splendour at his setting. Not seldom have hopes that never brighten life broken forth to gild the departing hour. (T. Guthrie, D.D.) *The unconsciousness of the sinner under the power of darkness*:—If we lay in some darksome prison loaden with irons, as many as we could bear, committed to the custody of some Cerberus-like keeper; how would we lament our hard fortune? but to lie in such a condition wherein is no light of knowledge of God, loaden with chains of darkness, hellish lusts of wrath, covetousness, pride, filthiness, in the custody of the devil himself, this none bewaileth. (P. Bayne, B.D.) *The kingdom of Christ*:—I. THE IMPORTANCE WHICH CHRIST HIMSELF ATTACHES TO HIS KINGLY CLAIMS. 1. There are crowns worn by living monarchs of which it would be difficult to estimate the value. The price paid for their jewels is the least part of it. They cost thousands of lives. And yet in His esteem, and in ours, Christ's crown outweighs them all. He gave his life for it. 2. The connection between our Lord's sufferings and these claims marks some of the most touching scenes in His history. The people rejected Him in His kingly character. "We will not have this King to reign over us." The soldiers reviled Him as a King; and His claim to be such was the crime for which He was crucified. It was a kingly inscription that stood above His dying head. 3. Our Lord had the strongest temptation to abandon these claims; and if He refused to give them up in the desert when tempted by the devil, when He had not a morsel to eat, and at the bar, when to have parted with them would have saved His life, He is not likely to yield them now. He has now no inducement to do so. A friendless prisoner no more, He stands at the right hand of God, and claims to reign over all whom He has conquered by love and redeemed by blood. 4. Would God we could live up to that truth. How often is it forgotten! each of us doing what is right in his own eyes, as though there were no King in Israel. Oh, that we were all as anxious to be delivered from the power as we are to escape the punishment of sin. II. FROM WHOM CHRIST RECEIVED HIS KINGDOM. 1. Not from the Jews. "His own received Him not." Once they tried to thrust royal honours on Him: afterwards they bore Him in royal state to the capital, and then they crucified Him. The only crown our Lord gets from man is woven with thorns. Had Christ consented to rule on their terms the Jews would have made Him king. Now to-day how many would accept

Jesus if He would allow them to retain their sins. But He accepts not the crown if sin is to wield the sceptre. 2. Not from His own people. The sceptre which a female hand sways so gracefully over the greatest, freest empire in the world was wrenched two hundred years ago from the grasp of a poor popish bigot; and his successor was borne to the vacant throne on the arms of a people who considered crowned heads less sacred than their liberties and religion. Is it by any such act that Christ is crowned? Is He a popular monarch in this sense? No. Here the king elects His subjects, not the subjects their king; and in that and other senses His kingdom is not of this world. Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and enemies to God, it is necessary that Christ should first choose you as His subjects, before you can choose Him as your King. Christ reigns by conquest, but His reign is not one of terror. He reigns as He conquered, by love. Enthroned in the heart He rules through the affections. 3. From God. When we look at the two great occasions on which our Lord was crowned, what a contrast do they present. The scene of the first is laid on earth. Behold Him stripped of His garments, tied to a post, scourged, clothed with an old purple robe, a wreath of thorns upon His head. Some in bitter mockery bend the knee as to a Cæsar and shout, "Hail, King of the Jews." Turn now to the other. The cross is vacant, the court empty, and from the vine-covered sides of Olivet a band of men are joyfully descending. While the disciples come down to the world, Jesus goes up to heaven escorted by a host of angels. His battle over, and the great victory won, the Conqueror is now to be crowned. Behold the scene as revealed by anticipation to the rapt eyes of Daniel (vii. 13). III. IN WHAT CHARACTER JESUS HOLDS THIS KINGDOM. Not as God or as man, but as God-man. Our Lord appeared in both these characters at the grave of Lazarus. "Jesus wept," and yet Death cowers before His eye. So on the Sea of Galilee, the Son of Mary sleeps, but raising His hand He said to the rude storm, "Peace, be still." Those two natures He still retains. As both God and man He occupies the thrones of grace and providence—holding under His dominion all worlds; for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and He has been made Head over all things to His Church. Simply as God there could be no addition to His possessions, nor could He receive them simply as man. IV. SEEK AN INTEREST IN THIS KINGDOM. Your eternal welfare turns on that. You must be crowned in heaven or cursed in hell. 1. Are you poor? That is no bar. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." 2. Are you degraded? That does not exclude you from the mercy and grace of God. 3. Have you done nothing to merit this kingdom? Who has? 4. Though you are not saved by obedience, remember that submission to Christ's commandment is required of all who belong to His kingdom. 5. In a general sense we are all His subjects; but in a saving sense Christ's kingdom is not without, but within. Unless the heart be right with Christ, all is wrong. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) "*His dear Son*"—Or more correctly, the Son of His love. Christ is so because—I. HE IS MOST WORTHY OF ALL OTHERS TO BE LOVED. As Judas is the "Son of Perdition," i.e., most worthy to be condemned. II. HE WAS FROM EVERLASTING BEGOTTEN OF THE LOVE OF HIS FATHER. He is God's "own" Son. III. HE IS INFINITELY FILLED WITH A SENSE OF HIS LOVE. "I always do the things that please Him." IV. IT IS HE BY WHOM LOVE IS DERIVED INTO OTHERS. He makes all other sons beloved. They are all loved because of Him and through Him. He imparts the lowest graces. This is all very comfortable. 1. He is like to speed anything He requests the Father for us, and will be sure to preserve us. 2. He is a King's Son, and infinitely beloved of His Father. How excellent a thing, then, to be Christ's member. (*N. Byfield.*) *Religion a great change*:—In an early period of the ministry of the Rev. John Wesley, he visited Epworth, in Lincolnshire, where his father had formerly been minister, but found the people greatly opposed to what they considered his new notions. He tells us, in his journal, that many persons were convinced of the importance of the truths he delivered from the tombstone of his father, some of whom were conveyed in a waggon to a neighbouring justice of the peace, to answer for the heresy with which they were charged. Mr. Wesley rode over also. When the magistrate asked what these persons had done, there was a deep silence; for that was a point their conductors had forgotten. At length, one of them said, "Why, they pretend to be better than other people; and, besides, they pray from morning to night." He asked, "But have they done anything besides?" "Yes, sir," said an old man, "An't please your worship, they have converted my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue, and now she is as quiet as a lamb." "Carry them back, carry them back," replied the justice, "and let them convert all the scolds in the town." (*Arvine.*) "*Translated us*":—

The word is a metaphor, and the comparison is taken from plants in nature, and there are divers things signified unto us in the similitude. As trees are translated in winter, not in the spring, so commonly our redemption is applied in the days of special affliction and sorrow: and as the plant is not first fruitful and then translated, but therefore translated that it may bear fruit, so we are not therefore redeemed because God was in love with our fruits; but therefore translated out of the kingdom of darkness, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. And as a tree may be truly removed, and new planted, and yet not presently bear fruit, so may a Christian be truly translated, and yet in the first instant of his conversion he may not show forth all the fruit he doth desire. In particular, translating hath two things in it. **I. PULLING UP.** The pulling up of a tree shadows out three things in the conversion of a sinner. 1. Separation from the world: he cannot be in Christ that hath his heart rooted in the earth, and keeps his old standing amongst these trees, the wicked of the world. 2. Deliverance both from original sin in the reign of it (which is the moisture of the old earth), and also from hardness of heart (for translating hath removing of the mould and stones that were about the root). 3. Godly sorrow raised by the sense of the strokes of the axe of God's threatenings, and by the loss of many sprouts and branches that were hidden in the earth. A Christian cannot escape without sorrow; for he hath many an unprofitable sprout of vanity, and sinful profit and pleasure he must part with. **II. THE SETTING OF THE TREE NOTES.**—1. Our engrafting into Christ by the Spirit of God through faith. 2. Our communion with the saints (the fruitful trees in God's orchard), as also it notes our preservation by the infusion of the sap of holy graces. Conclusion: And it is worthy to be noted that He saith "translated us," to teach us that there remains in man the same nature after calling that was before; for our natures are not destroyed in conversion, but translated: there remains the same faculties in the soul, and the same powers in the body; yea, the constitution and complexion of man is not destroyed, as the melancholy man doth not cease to be so after conversion, only the humour is sanctified unto a fitness for godly sorrow, and holy meditation, and the easy renouncing of the world, &c., and the like may be said of other humours in man's nature. (*N. Byfield.*) *The translation:—*I. IN DELIVERING HIS PEOPLE FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS, CHRIST SAVES THEM FROM ETERNAL PERDITION. People talk about the mercy of God in a way for which they have no warrant in His Word: and ignoring His holiness, justice, and truth, they lay this and the other vain hope as a flattering unction to their souls. II. HOW WE ARE BROUGHT INTO CHRIST'S KINGDOM. 1. By translation. (1) There is a difference between being transformed and translated. The first describes a change of character, the second of state. These changes are coincident; but the transformation is not complete until the time for the second translation. Then those who were translated at conversion into a state of grace, are translated at death into a state of glory. (2) It is a great mistake to suppose that God is only active and man passive in this work. You may translate a man from one earthly kingdom into another while he is asleep, and at death a man may be translated to glory in a state of unconsciousness; but it is not in this placid way that sinners pass out of darkness into Christ's kingdom. 2. This translation is attended by suffering and self-denial. Killed by a blow, or deprived of existence and consciousness by an opiate, a man may die to natural life unconsciously, but never to sin. Hence those striking figures of crucifixion. But the crown is worthy of the cross. True there is much more pain in going to hell than to heaven, and although this were not, one hour of glory will recompense all the sufferings of earth. But be assured that as it is among pangs and birth struggles that a man is born the first time, so when he is born again, Christ baptizes with fire. How often has water fallen on the calm brow of a sleeping infant who has been translated thus into the visible Church. But a fiery baptism! Can a man take fire into his bosom and not be burned? God is a consuming fire to His people's sins, and He cannot be so without them knowing it. 3. In this translation God and man are active. Our Lord ascended from earth to heaven without effort; not so His people from nature unto grace. We receive salvation, still we must put forth our hand to take it, as a drowning man clutches the saving rope. God works in grace as in nature; helps the man who helps himself. The reason why men are not saved is not that God hath forgotten to be gracious, or that the blood of Christ has lost its efficacy; but because men will take no pains to be saved. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The duty of thankfulness for the deliverance:—*If we had some grievous tyrant ruling over us, and God should take him away and set a prince of singular clemency over us, should not the blessing of all the kingdom come upon Him for so singular a

change? But when He taketh the devil's iron yokes off our necks and bringeth us under the kingdom of that most meek King who will not bruise a broken reed, nor quench the smoking flax, here none in comparison is thankful. (*P. Bayne, B.D.*) *God is the Deliverer* :—King Theodore kept two or three British subjects in prison, and no entreaty, expostulation, threat, could induce him to release them. At last the British nation arose and said, "At all costs the prisoners must be released;" and so General Napier led his army along the defiles over the mountains. At length he came to Magdala, the capital of Abyssinia. King Theodore was conquered and slain, and so General Napier ascended to the capital. But perhaps some of you do not know that as General Napier rode into the city, those captives, bowed down with their long imprisonment, came near to him, and laid their hands upon his horse's saddle and thanked him as their deliverer. He said to them, "Do not thank me; God is the deliverer. The Christians in England have been praying for you." (*J. L. Nye.*)

Vers. 14-20. *In Whom. The deity of Christ* :—Christ is Divine because—I. HE WAS REDEEMED US. II. HE IS THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS. III. ALL THINGS WERE CREATED FOR HIS GLORY. IV. HIS ETERNAL PRE-EXISTENCE. V. BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST. (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *Christ first* :—I. IN THE METAPHYSICAL ORDER. 1. He is the image of the invisible God. 2. It pleased God that in Him should all fulness (of the Divine attributes) dwell. He is therefore the Mediator of the knowledge of God. II. IN THE PHYSICAL ORDER. The first thesis determined the relation of Christ to God; this establishes His relation to Nature. 1. He is before all things, the firstborn (heir) of all creation. 2. He is the Author of all that exists. Consequently He is the Mediator of existence or natural life. III. IN THE THEOLOGICAL ORDER, which, as does the following, refers to His relations with men. 1. He is the Redeemer. 2. The reconciler. Thus He is the Mediator of the restoration of the normal relation of man to God. IV. IN THE MORAL ORDER. He is the head of the spiritual body—the Church—and therefore is the Mediator of the new life or the spiritual creation. V. IN THE APOCALYPTIC ORDER, *i.e.*, of the order of the things to come. He has died, as all men die, but He has also risen, and in that He has taken precedence of all, and His own will follow Him. Consequently He is the Mediator of life eternal. (*Professor Reuss.*) *Jesus Christ the end of the creation* :—(text in conjunction with Eph. i. 9-10; iii. 9-11.) I. STATEMENT. 1. The creation looked forward to the Christ from the beginning. Without Him for its goal it were purposeless. Not that he was latent in nature to be evolved, but it was the plan of creation that it should reach its consummation in Him. 2. In Him the universe subsists, is banded together because it completes itself in Him. Without Him it would disintegrate and be a chaos instead of a cosmos. 3. Although sin has disturbed the scheme of things and would wreck all, the original plan holds in Christ. The injury will be repaired and the universe attain its end. II. PLAN OF CREATION. 1. Matter is brought into being (Gen. i. 1), and is rudimental (Gen. i. 2). The Holy Ghost whose province is evolution and organization broods over the elemental abyss. At length light becomes with, doubtless, its kindred agents, heat, electricity. Processes go on, and the atmosphere is constituted. The new agents become additional forces, and there results the mineral kingdom (Gen. i. 3-10). 2. This is a preparation for higher planes of being. The floral world has a becoming, assimilating all that has gone before, and transforming them into the living organisms of root, trunk, bough, fruit, &c. 3. The vegetable world is a prophecy of something higher. In due time the animal world gathers up the elements of all below it, and exalts them into more complex and nobler organisms. 4. There is a pause. The eternal Three-in-One sit in council (Gen. i. 26; ii. 7). (1) The creation has been in travail with man as to his bodily nature in all the preceding formations. Man is the compendium, the apex of physical nature. (2) In his creation another department of the spiritual world comes in view. It seeks to ally itself with the physical. It also would complete itself in man. By the inbreathing of the Almighty man becomes a living soul. The two realms thus meet in him, and invest him with unique dignity and prerogative. He is the microcosm of the universe. (3) Of what man is this ideal true? Of the first Adam? He is man inchoate, in germ and possibilities only, not in the fulness of perfection. Can he raise himself and put all nature under him as its head? The tree of life blossoms with promise, but he cannot bridge the chasm between the Infinite and the finite. There must be a higher sphere than nature or man to bring out their meaning. If the Eternal Word will become man the problem is solved—the mighty void between God and man will be filled up. 5.

The Son of God did become man. He passed through every ordeal triumphantly, and was glorified at the right hand of God. The universe is glorified in Him. Thus did He sum up in Himself the creation. It tended towards Him from the first, and finds its last, deepest sense and full satisfaction in Him the true, archetypal Man.

III. COROLLARIES. 1. The creation is a unity, not a granulated mass of things having no other relation but mechanical juxtaposition; but an organic whole, having one Head who fills all things from Himself, and sends energy and direction through the whole. Each several part has its due relation to the others, and the whole to Christ. 2. The Incarnation belongs to creation. It is its crown, and is essential to its order and perfection. It is not an intrusion. It is sin that is the innovation in the order of the universe. And the Incarnation carries in it plenary resources for the overmastering of sin. By His obedience unto death the Head of the universe rendered satisfaction for human guilt; and by the powers of the Incarnation He will cast out sin. Somewhere, in the outer darkness, some cesspool shall receive all the filth of the universe and hide it for ever. 3. There is suggested a solution of the problem of miracles. They are no violations of the plan of creation. Each succeeding system bore in itself higher forces and methods than the preceding, but without disturbance. So humanity imported into the world methods and powers supreme over all beneath it, but in entire harmony therewith. That such ascendancy should show itself in our Lord's miracles there is nothing contranatural. Sin being foreign has brought an unnatural condition of things, and our Lord's hushing of the storm, expulsion of demons, healing the sick, and raising the dead, were but foretokenings of the coming restitution of all things to their natural state of purity, health, and life. To put creation back again into its regular condition is not to do violence to nature. As Augustine says, "A miracle is not a contradiction of nature, but of nature as man knows it." 4. Here is the solution of the astronomical objection to Christianity. Astronomy is supposed to demonstrate man's extreme littleness, and to show that his actions good or bad are beneath the notice of God. But man in Christ is the end of the universe. In Him man stands in closest union with the Infinite centre of all being. "All things are His" (1 Cor. iii. 21-23). It is quality, not quantity, that counts in the transcendental calculus. Man must be intrinsically of greater value than all that went to prepare the way for him. This will serve to explain the interest of angels in him. The Incarnation signifies that man has an inherent dignity no hugeness of the physical world and no grandeur of angels can equal. He has no superior but God, and to Him alone his knee should bow. 5. If the all is one organic unity, the lower joined to the higher, and looking forward to it, then there must be a correspondence between the lower and the higher. The natural will be a parable of the supernatural, and all types must sum themselves up in Christ their prototype. Science will yet see the harmony of reason and faith. 6. Christ being the Firstborn and Head of the creation, He is the Priest of the universe (Heb. v. 7). All other priesthood must be derived from Him. All worship must be offered through Him. All blessing will return from God through Him. 7. Christ is the end of history. The movement of our race is a process towards manhood in Christ. Sin has distracted the current, but has not arrested it. The religions, philosophies, and governments of the old world prepared the way for the first advent. A mighty impulse was thrilled through the nation from that day directing all movements towards the second advent. 8. Seeing that Christ is head over all, all things must become subject to Him. We see not yet all things put under Him. Sin has disnaturalized man, but it shall be overruled and made to serve the very ends it sought to frustrate (1 Cor. xv. 24-28; 2 Tim. ii. 19). Evil does not inhere in matter. Matter will be transformed (Rom. viii. 19-22). 9. The Incarnation must needs be perpetual. Were the Son of God to lay aside His humanity, the creation would fail of its end and complement. It confers upon the creation supreme blessing; to relinquish it would entail a deep curse. 10. Men must needs come into full and permanent union with Christ. Severed from Him they can do nothing. Sin, the discord in the everlasting order, must be renounced. Christ must abide in men and they in Him, in order that sin may be eliminated. Only thus can they attain the Divine Ideal transformation into true manhood in the image of God. (C. P. Jennings.)

The witness of creation to the gospel:—1. The subject of the chapter is the glory of the Son of God. (1) In His essential relation to God He is the true *eikon basilike*—only image which it is not idolatry to worship. (2) His relation to the universe is that of immediate Creator. (3) His permanent relation to every creature is that of a central point for all phenomena. (4) His headship over the new redeemed humanity is that of the first-born among the dead, the source of

risen life to all the body. (5) His central pre-eminence in the whole spiritual world lies in the fact that He is Peacemaker by blood, the sole Reconciler to God. Never did John soar higher or sweep a wider horizon than this. 2. To confine ourselves to one thought here. Christ is the only link of connection between created minds and the unapproachable, unknowable Godhead. "Image of the invisible God" is parallel with John's "No man hath seen God at any time," &c., with Heb. i. 1-2, and with the Master's "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." The function of Revealer, however, does not attach to Christ's incarnate life only; He was the Word of God before, and revealed God in creation. From this follows that God the Revealer, when He tells of God in Nature and in Redemption must speak in harmonious terms. Both discoveries must agree, and hence we expect to find certain lines in physics leading up to Christianity, certain thoughts of the Divine mind which grow clearer when I cast back fresh light from redemption. 3. What, then, is there in nature to fit into the representation of Deity which we gather from—I. THE INCARNATION. 1. This stands on the threshold of the Christian system, and has no parallel in history, and at first sight none in nature. Yet look a little closer, and you will find that it rests upon the fact that man was made in the image of his Maker. For the Son and perfect Image of Godhead to become man—making the thoughts, emotions, and activities of our nature a glass wherein to mirror the heart of Deity—implies some affinity between the Divine and human, or some previous resemblance of man to God. Reason must, in some fashion, reflect the thoughts of God, and virtue His holiness, and points of moral and intellectual contact must bind the human spirit to that of the Incarnate Redeemer. How else could God become incarnate to redeem? 2. Now nature is alive with thoughts that are very human. God utters His mind in His works, and that mind is like our own. If that were not so science would be impossible. The world's Maker and its observer must have something in common, if the observer is to understand the Maker's meaning. A world put together by a Being whose notions of truth, utility, purpose, &c., bore no relation to mine would be a world unintelligible to me. But the world satisfies the reason and gratifies the taste of the human student, who detects in it with joy another mind at work similar to his own. (1) You know how keen is the pleasure many take in mechanical contrivance, but the pages of modern books of science are full of beautiful contrivances. (2) Equally human is the parsimony of nature. He who made this world does not overcome difficulties by inventing some fresh force for every occasion; He will rather go round about to make existing instruments answer a new purpose. To the same economical habit it is due that through the organized tribes of being certain radical types are perseveringly adhered to. A few governing ideas, modified in details only as far as needful, are made to do service, and give rise to endless diversity. This is just the style of workmanship that workmen admire. (3) Very human, too, is the place occupied in the works of God by beauty and utility. In man's productions decoration is always subordinated to convenience, and wise men will sacrifice the ornamental without remorse when it can be gained only at the expense of human well-being. Now the original school of all art is the handiwork of God. So lavish is His decoration of the most unnoticed objects that He must do it because He loves it; yet it is never put before utility. Nay, some animals have been made unlovely to suit their convenience; but even in them ornament is introduced where it can do no harm. 3. Nature, then, betrays in its Creator a mind so like our own as to lay a foundation for the Incarnation. The Son in impressing on all things His stamp, as God's image left a signature so human-like that we can well credit the old Scripture when it says man wears the likeness of the Son of God; and we see a propriety in the announcement of the new scripture that the same Son wears the nature which He had on purpose made so correspondent with His own. Creation of man's mind in God's image; incarnation of God's image in manhood—these are two answering facts, the one witnessed by science, the other by the gospel. II. THE ATONEMENT. 1. In so far as this is a moral fact, whereas in nature there is neither sin nor retribution, and therefore no need of atonement, we cannot expect to find there any suggestion of reconciliation with God. Nevertheless nature indicates that the Creator possesses moral qualities, and is a character as well as an intellect. 2. Some particulars of this. (1) Thinkers have been startled by the gospel declaration that God cares for so insignificant a creature as man. But does He appear to the student as a person likely to overlook any interest because it is minute. Remember what pains the scientists tell us have been expended on the most tiny and obscure piece of organized matter to perfect its adaptation to its

place, and to elaborate every organ of it for its proper purpose. It is for investigators to tell us whether they do not find traces of kindness in this such as bespeak a benevolent heart as well as a contriving intellect. If they do, then the love of God, which seeks and saves one lost soul, is but the crown of a character patient, considerate, which has left its traces on the lower creation. (2) But there are facts of an opposite order. Violence, death, extinction have always obtained. But whatever difficulties attend this frightful havoc of life, the sacrifice ministers always to some upward movement. Lower life feeds higher life, or the individual becomes a victim to some agency needful for the general good, the gale, the flood, the lightning: or, as the earth grows fit to bear nobler forms, the earlier ones pass away. We read here the law of sacrifice—unconscious and involuntary, indeed, because these creatures have no power of moral choice; but true, nevertheless, because sacrificed for some nobler good and more enduring end. See how beasts of prey have to make room for population, and serviceable animals are slaughtered for man's use. When I pass from this scene to Golgotha I am not conscious of any violent shock. There is pain for the good of others, and death as the price of life. The Maker of the suffering creation is not afraid to suffer for others. He obeys His own law, and the cross would have been a far more surprising spectacle had it stood upon an earth where no creature ever bled to advance creation's good. (3) The only key we can find to the Atonement lies in the inviolability of Divine law. To magnify that God gave His Son to die. Now it would have been surprising had the Son as Creator betrayed any indifference to the violence of natural law, and yet come as Redeemer to die to vindicate moral law. No such inconsistency appears. Physical students insist on the constancy with which the former avenges transgression; and so the latter decrees death for disobedience. And it could so little be set aside in favour of mercy, that not until the Lawgiver had Himself honoured His own statute, and suffered His own penalty, did He forgive. 3. As far, then, as such indications go, the face of God, as traced indistinctly in Creation, answers to His face as its glory shines in the gospel of Christ. (*J. O. Dykes, D.D.*) We have redemption through His blood.—I. REDEMPTION. Deliverance.—1. From the guilt of sin, original or actual, of omission or commission. 2. From the power and prevalence of sin (Rom. vi. 14; Heb. ix. 13-14; Acts iii. 26; 1 Pet. i. 18; Matt. i. 21; Titus ii. 14). 3. From the tyranny of Satan (Col. i. 13; 1 John iii. 8; Luke xxii. 31-32). 4. From the curse of the law (Gal. iii. 13; iv. 5). 5. From the wrath of God. (1) In this world (Rom. v. 1; Luke ii. 14). (2) In the next (1 Thess. i. 10; Acts iv. 12). II. ITS MEANS: "His blood." 1. It was necessary that our Redeemer should be man as well as God (1 Tim. ii. 5; Heb. ii. 14-17), that He might mediate between both parties (Job ix. 33). 1. That He should suffer (Heb. viii. 5; Luke xxiv. 26) a bloody death (Heb. ix. 22). (1) To expiate our sins (1 John ii. 2; Isa. liii. 5-6). (2) To conquer Satan (Heb. ii. 14). (3) To reconcile God to us and us to God (Rom. v. 10-11; Eph. ii. 16). III. ITS BENEFIT. "Forgiveness of sins." 1. The names in Scripture given to it. (1) Remission (Acts ii. 38), dismissal, releasing (Isa. lxi. 1). 2. Mercifulness to our sins (Heb. viii. 12; Luke xviii. 13). (2) Passing over sin (Rom. iii. 25). (4) Purgings from sin (Psa. li. 7). (5) Not remembering our sins (Jer. xxxi. 34; Heb. viii. 12). (6) Covering sin (Psa. xxxii. 1; lxxxv. 2; li. 9). (7) Taking away and removing sin (Psa. ciii. 10-12; Exod. xxxiv. 7; Lev. xvi. 20-22). (8) Casting behind God's back (Isa. xxxviii. 17; Psa. xc. 8). (9) Blotting out sin (Isa. xliii. 25; xlv. 22). (10) Not imputing sin (Psa. xxxii. 1-2; Rom. iv. 7-8). (11) Casting it in the depth of the sea (Mic. vii. 18-19). 2. The nature of it: an act of God's grace, whereby He absolves us from the obligation to those punishments, which by His law are due to us for those sins. (1) In general it is an act of God's grace. (a) Of God. It is ascribed to Him alone (Exod. xxxiv. 7; Mark ii. 7). We are to ask it of Him only (Matt. vi. 12). He alone justifies (Rom. viii. 33). Our sins are only against Him (Psa. li. 4). (b) Of His grace—not wisdom, power, justice (Isa. xliii. 25)—in Christ (Eph. i. 7). (2) The specific difference. (a) We are obliged to bear the punishments due by God's law to sin (Gal. iii. 10). (b) God takes off that obligation (2 Sam. xii. 13; Mark iii. 28-29). IV. THIS BENEFIT IS ONLY BY CHRIST'S DEATH. 1. All mankind is guilty before God, and so obnoxious to His wrath and everlasting punishment (Rom. iii. 19; Gal. iii. 22). 2. The eternal Son was pleased to take man's nature upon Him so as to become both God and man in one person (Isa. vii. 14; Rom. ix. 5; Phil. ii. 6-7). 3. Christ in this nature was pleased to suffer disgrace, the curses of the law (Gal. iii. 13). The wrath of God (Matt. xxvii. 46). An ignominious, accursed, painful, and bloody death; and all for sin, the only cause of death (Heb. x. 12).

4. Christ suffered all this, not for Himself (1 Pet. ii. 22, iii. 18; Heb. vii. 26), but for us who partake of that nature in which He suffered (Isa. liii. 5-6; Rom. iv. 25; Gal. i. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 3). 5. These sufferings were of greater worth than if all men had suffered eternal death (Acts xx. 28). 6. Hence God was pleased to accept of them as a sufficient price of our redemption, and satisfaction to His justice for our sins (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Eph. i. 6). 7. God's justice being thus satisfied, He is reconciled unto us, and takes off our obligations to punishment, by reason of what His Son underwent for us; and therefore for His sake is said to pardon our sins (Rom. v. 10; Col. i. 20; 2 Cor. v. 21). V. USE. 1. Hence you may learn what ground we have to trust in Christ for pardon (Rom. viii. 34). 2. Hence be advised to make it your business to get your sins forgiven: considering—(1) How miserable you are without it: God is angry (Psa. vii. 11); hell is threatened. (2) How happy with it (Psa. xxxii. 1-2). Your persons accepted and justified (Psa. xxxii. 1-2; Rom. iv. 6-7); God reconciled and become your friend (Rom. v. 1, 9-10). 3. All things working for your good, and glory for your reward. (*Bishop Beveridge.*) *Redemption*.—The liberty for which the slave longs is, perhaps, the sweetest earthly cup man drinks. Health has been often said to be the greatest earthly blessing. What are money, luxury, titles, a crown even, without it; but what is health without liberty. We sympathize with the instinctive love of freedom in animals—the noisy joy of the dog when he gets off his chain; the noble eagle chained to the perch, strangling in its struggles to escape. Much more do we sympathize with our fellow-creatures, whether slaves or citizens, who have made the altars of liberty red with their blood, preferring death to bondage. But there is a more degrading and dreadful slavery, that of the slaves of Satan, who are sold under sin. Would that we set the same price on spiritual as we do on earthly liberty! What struggles would then be made and prayers offered for salvation! And when saved ourselves, how anxious we should be for the salvation of others. I. WE ALL NEED REDEMPTION. To a man who knows he is nigh unto death offer a medicine that will cure him, and he will buy it at any price; but offer the same to one who believes himself in health and he holds it cheap. For a similar reason are Christ and His redemption rejected of men. So the great work of God's Spirit is to rouse a man from the torpor induced by the poison of sin. And blessed the book, preacher, or providence that sends the conviction into our hearts. For to a soul convinced of misery who so welcome as the Saviour? 1. The slavery of sin is natural to man. We pity the mother as robbed of one of her best joys, who knows that the little creature on her bosom is a slave. But that calamity is ours. "In sin did my mother conceive me." "I am carnal, sold under sin." "Ye were the slaves of sin"—not one hired for a period, but branded with the mark of a perpetual bondage. 2. This slavery is the universal state of man. Slavery is the worst and oldest of human institutions. At an early period, in Cain, he who should have been his brother's keeper, became his murderer; and when man did become his brother's keeper, it was too often as an owner. But, wherever slavery obtained, some were free. It is not so with sin. The king and the beggar are both slaves; every man's heart is black, whatever his face may be. 3. This slavery is the state of all unconverted men. (1) Some are slaves of gold. What bondage is equal to that? for a man to harden his heart to the claims of pity, to deny his own flesh and blood, to lie and cheat, or, if not, throw his soul away for money. (2) Some are slaves of lust. To what base society and acts of villainy do their tyrant passions condemn them. The thief that steals my money is a man of honour compared with him who steals a woman's virtue. (2) Some are slaves of drunkenness. Of all slavery this is the most helpless and hopeless. Other sins drown conscience, this reason as well. (3) Some are slaves to the opinions of the world. The Macedonian boasted that he had conquered the world; the world can boast that it has conquered them. Theirs' the miserable condition of a servant who has to bear in some ill-governed household the caprices, not of one mistress, but of many. II. OUR REDEMPTION IS NOT A SIMPLE MATTER OF TIME. Every fifty years, and in certain cases, seven, redeemed the Hebrew. Everywhere time works changes, the young grow old, the poor get rich, the rich poor. Time alters the form of the globe. But amid these changes the condition of the sinner alters not. The longer you live in sin the more hopeless is salvation. Do you say, But what am I to do? Can I redeem myself? Assuredly not. But are we to sit still as though redemption would come like a jubilee in the common course of providence? No, we are to be up and doing. I do not say that we are to rise like an oppressed nation which wrings its liberties from a tyrant hand; nor that we can purchase redemption; nor that through works of righteous-

ness we can lay any claim to its blessings. And yet I say, "Labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life." There are various ways of being diligent. Though men call him idle the poor beggar is as diligent as others; and such as that suppliant's, along with the use of other means, are the labours to which God's mercy and your own necessities call you. Unable to save yourself, besiege the throne of grace. III. CHRIST IS THE REDEEMER. There is no other. His types and symbols teach this. There was but one ark in the flood, and all perished save those who sailed in it. There was but one altar in the Temple, one way through the Red Sea, "one Mediator between God and man." 1. Christ does not redeem us by simply revealing the truth. Were He a Saviour only in this sense there are others. From "the Sun of Righteousness" He changes into a star, one of a constellation which is formed of Moses and the prophets. Many of them, indeed, had more to do in revealing God's will than Christ. No book bears His name, and the truths which fell from Him form but a fraction of Scripture. Yet who but He is set forth as *the Redeemer*, in whose name else are we commanded to believe and be baptized? 2. Christ does not redeem us by His example. That man is in a sense my saviour who leads me safely along any dangerous path, and in a corresponding way some say Christ redeemed us. He set us such an example, that by following His steps we may enter the kingdom of heaven. Alas for safety if it turn on that! Walk as He walked! Who is sufficient for that? We should certainly attempt to follow Jesus, yet our best attempts will leave us more and more convinced that our only hope for redemption lies in the mercy of the Father and the merits of the Son. 3. Christ has redeemed us by suffering in our room and stead. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) I. WHAT REMISSION OF SINS IS. 1. Sin is a violation of the law of God (1 John iii. 4). In this law there is the precept which is the rule of duty, and the sanction or penalty which shows what God might do if He dealt with us according to our merit. Accordingly in sin there is—(1) The fault. Man, God's subject, and obliged to Him by His benefits, swerves from the rule of his duty and exposes himself to God's judgment. (2) The guilt, which is liahleness to punishment. 2. Forgiveness is a dissolving the obligation to punishment, a freedom in God's way from the consequences of sin. (1) It is not a disannulling of the act as a natural action. What is done cannot be undone. (2) Nor is it abolished as a criminal action. Forgiveness does not make a fault to be no fault. The innocent are acquitted, but the guilty are pardoned as sinners. (3) Nor is the merit of the sinful act lessened, it still deserves punishment. (4) Forgiveness therefore is a passing by the fault so that it shall not rise up in judgment against us. The fault is the sinner's, the punishment the Judge's, which He may fashion on certain terms stated in the law of grace. I prove it (1) from the nature of the thing, for there is such a relation between the fault and the guilt, the sin and punishment; that the one cannot be without the other. Therefore, if the Judge will not impute the fault there will be an immunity from punishment. (2) From the common rule of speaking among men. He cannot be said to forgive a fault who exacts punishment; and what do men mean when they pray for pardon but that they may be exempted from punishment? (3) It would impeach the justice and mercy of God were He to punish where He has pardoned. (4) Scripture phrases show that God blots out our sins (*Psa. lxxi. 2, xxxii. 1; Isa. xxxviii. 17; Micah vii. 19; Jer. xxxi. 34.*) II. THE NATURE OF REDEMPTION. 1. Our being redeemed supposes a captivity and bondage. (1) Unrenewed men are slaves to sin (*Titus iii. 3; John viii. 34.*) Men imagine a life of vanity to be a very good life, and it were so if liberty consisted in doing what we list rather than what we ought. But it is not, and experience shows that men cannot leave their base satisfactions. (2) As they are under sin so they are under Satan (*Eph. ii. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 26.*) (3) For this they are under the curse of God. 2. To recover us there was a price to be paid by way of ransom to God. We are not delivered by prayer, nor mere force, nor out of pity, but by just satisfaction to provoked justice. The price was not paid to Satan, who is a usurper—from him we are delivered by force—but to God. Man had not sinned against Satan, but God, to whom belong condemnation or pardon. And God being satisfied, Satan has no power over us. That redemption implies payment of a price is clear (*Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6.*) Christ in recovering men in dealing with God is set forth as a Lamb slain (*Rev. v. 6, 6*); in dealing with Satan as a lion recovering the prey. A ransom was necessary because God had made a former covenant which was not to be quit but upon valuable consideration, lest His moral attributes should fall to the ground. (1) The

honour of His justice was to be secured (Rom. iii. 5, 6; Gen. xviii. 25). If God should pardon without satisfaction how should He be revered as the holy Governor of the world? Hence Rom. iii. 25, 26. (2) His wisdom. If the law should be recalled, the Lawgiver would run the hazard of levity. (3) His holy nature would not permit it. Some way must be found to signify His hatred of sin (Psa. xi. 6). (4) His authority. It would be a derogation to the authority of His law if it might be broken with impunity. (5) His truth. God's word is not to be regarded as a scarecrow (Gen. iii. 5; Dent. xxix. 19, 20). 3. None was fit to give this ransom but Jesus Christ, the God-man. He was man to undertake it in our name, God to perform it in His own strength; a man that He might be under the law and die, God that He might put the stamp upon the metal and make it current coin. By taking human nature a price was put into His hands, to which His Divine nature gave the requisite value (Acts xx. 28; Heb. ix. 13). 4. Nothing performed by Christ could be a sufficient ransom but His death. (1) To answer the types wherein without shedding of blood was no remission. (2) In the nature of the thing (John viii. 20). Death was threatened to sin, and feared by the sinner, and must be borne, therefore, for deliverance. 5. From this ransom there is a liberty resulting to us; but not a liberty to sin (Rom. vi. 22). Christ came not to free us from the duty of the law, but its penalty, otherwise it would promote the devil's interest. He redeemed us that we might serve God. 6. We are not partakers of this liberty till we are united to Christ by faith "in whom."

III. REMISSION OF SINS IS A PRINCIPAL PART OF REDEMPTION. 1. How a part. (1) Redemption is taken for the laying down of the price. That was done on the cross (Heb. ix. 12). (2) In its application. Besides the ransom there is actual deliverance. Complete redemption we shall enjoy at the last day (Rom. viii. 23; Eph. iv. 30, i. 14). Begun deliverance, which we now enjoy by faith, consists of justification (Eph. i. 7), where sin is freely pardoned, and we delivered from evil and wrath; and sanctification (1 Peter i. 18; Titus ii. 14). 2. A principal part, for—(1) The power of Satan is destroyed (Acts xxvi. 18). (2) The reign of sin is broken. The gift of the sanctifying Spirit is part of our pardon applied (Col. ii. 13). (3) We are eased of our tormenting fears. (4) Death is unstinged (1 Cor. xv. 56). (5) The obligation to eternal punishment ceases. IV. USE. To persuade you to seek after this benefit.

1. We all once needed it. Nothing but pardon will serve your turn. (1) Not forbearance on God's part. (2) Not senseless forgetfulness or baseless hope on yours. 2. The best of us still need it. Renewed sins need new pardon; daily infirmities daily repentance. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) 1. The apostle had been speaking of Christian privileges as being matters of present enjoyment—meekness for heaven; deliverance from sin, &c., are in the actual possession of the Christian. 2. There are two methods proposed by which men hope to secure God's favour. Thousands consider it presumption to profess to have it, but hope to do so after they have prayed more and done more good deeds. God's method is the reverse. What man places at the end He places at the beginning; what man says "work for," He says "work from." Turning away our thoughts from self He fixes them on Christ. 3. The different results on feeling resulting are immense. The man who works for future forgiveness has at best the spirit of a servant; he who takes forgiveness now as God's free gift in Christ enjoys reconciliation and sonship. I. REDEMPTION AS IDENTICAL WITH FORGIVENESS OF SINS. 1. Redemption is something more than rescue. If you see a man in danger and pluck him out you save but not redeem him. If you see a man oppressed and snatch him from his enemy you deliver but not redeem him. Redemption is the release of a man by the payment of ransom. We by our transgressions have exposed ourselves to God's law, which knows no pity, holds us in its grasp, and will inflict, unless we are delivered, the fearful penalty of eternal death. But if that penalty be remitted we are redeemed, and so forgiveness is equivalent to redemption. But sin has also brought us under its own power, and so made us its slaves; and the only way of securing us and setting us free is forgiveness. 2. The one thing we absolutely require as sinners is the remission of the horrible penalty, and it is neither irrational nor immoral to be afraid of that penalty; but we must be released from the power of sin before our happiness can be secured. Tell me that I am not to be punished and you have made me glad, but you have not inspired me with love to God. But tell me that the means of forgiveness is the sacrifice of God's dear Son, that God pardons not only as a Sovereign but as a Father, and the power of sin will be broken, and I enter on the joyful, ennobling service of love. II. REDEMPTION AS EFFECTED THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. 1. In Phil. ii. the apostle, in speaking of Christ's

death, has in view Christ's obedience; here in using the term "blood" his idea is expiation, and so elsewhere where the word is used; because in the Jewish sacrifices it was not the death of the victim, but its blood that was the typical instrument of expiation. 2. Such a redemption is necessary to meet the demands of the heart and to produce a changed feeling towards God. (1) Forgiveness must be a righteous forgiveness; not a mere easy, weak-minded passing over of transgression. Redemption by the blood of Christ meets this demand of the awakened conscience, for in the cross God appears more awful than elsewhere in His hatred of sin and His determination to punish it. (2) But it is also the forgiveness of a Father we want, and nowhere have we such an exhibition of God's love as in the cross. Conclusion.—This redemption is only to be had in Christ. Out of Him, however respectable and moral, we are slaves of sin and exposed to the curse. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) *Plan of redemption*:—Suppose a large graveyard surrounded by a high wall, with only one entrance by a large iron gate which is fast bolted. Within these walls are tens of thousands of human beings, by one disease descending to the grave. There is no balm to relieve them, no physician there: they must perish. This is the condition of man as a sinner. All have sinned, and the soul that sinneth shall die. While man was in this deplorable state, Mercy, an attribute of Deity, came down and stood at the gate, looked at the scene, and wept over it, exclaiming, "Oh, that I might enter! I would bind up their wounds; I would relieve their sorrows; I would save their souls." While Mercy stood weeping at the gate, an embassy of angels, commissioned from the court of heaven to some other world, passing over, paused at the sight, and Heaven forgave that pause. Seeing Mercy standing there, they cried, "Mercy, Mercy, can you not enter? can you look upon this scene, and not pity? can you pity, and not relieve?" Mercy replied, "I can see;" and in her tears she added, "I pity, but cannot relieve."—"Why can you not enter?"—"Oh!" said Mercy, "Justice has barred the gate against me, and I cannot, must not, unbar it." At this moment Justice himself appeared, as it were to watch the gate. The angels inquired of him, "Why will you not let Mercy in?" Justice replied, "My law is broken, and it must be honoured: die they or Justice must." At this there appeared a form among the angelic band, like unto the Son of God, who, addressing Himself to Justice, said, "What are thy demands?" Justice replied, "My terms are stern and rigid. I must have sickness for their health; I must have ignominy for their honour; I must have death for life; without the shedding of blood there is no remission."—"Justice," said the Son of God, "I accept thy terms. On Me be this wrong, and let Mercy enter."—"When," said Justice, "will you perform this promise?" Jesus replied, "Four thousand years hence, upon the hill of Calvary, without the gates of Jerusalem, I will perform it in My own person." The deed was prepared and signed in the presence of the angels of God. Justice was satisfied; and Mercy entered, preaching salvation in the name of Jesus. The deed was committed to the patriarchs; by them to the kings of Israel and the prophets; by them it was preserved till Daniel's seventy weeks were accomplished; and, at the appointed time, Justice appeared on the hill of Calvary, and Mercy presented to him the important deed. "Where," said Justice, "is the Son of God?" Mercy answered, "Behold Him at the bottom of the hill, bearing His own cross;" and then He departed, and stood aloof at the hour of trial. Jesus ascended the hill, while in His train followed His weeping Church. Justice immediately presented Him with the important deed, saying, "This is the day when this bond is to be executed." When He received it, did He tear it in pieces, and give it to the winds of heaven? No: He nailed it to His cross, exclaiming, "It is finished!" Justice called on holy fire to come down, and consume the sacrifice. Holy fire descended: it swallowed His humanity; but, when it touched His divinity, it expired, and there was darkness over the whole heavens; but, glory to God in the highest! on earth peace, and good-will to men. (*Christmas Evans.*) *The greatness of redemption*:—If that a king should empty all his coffers, and alienate all his crown land to rescue his subjects, he should show himself a natural prince: but what is this to that ransom which our King hath tendered? (*P. Bayne, B.D.*) *Redemption incomplete until accepted by faith in Christ*:—Suppose there were twenty traitors in the Tower lay condemned; say again, the prince should yield his father such satisfaction for some whom he would save, wherewith the king his father should be contented, and give him their pardon thereupon; here the thing is done betwixt the king and his son, yet till the prince send to them, write to the keeper to deliver such and such to him, they are in the state they were in, and so continue. So it

is with God, Christ, and us : the redemption is all concluded betwixt God and His beloved Son ; yet till this is effectually made known to our hearts, so that they believe on this grace of Christ, we are as we were, in hold, in the fear of our condemnation. We are justified through the redemption in Christ, but so that before it can be applied in us we must have faith in His blood, being set forth unto us in the word preached. Can we have the strength of bread without eating bread ? No more can we have any benefit by the bread of life without believing on Him. In Christ by faith we have these things. (*Ibid.*) *Redemption partial and complete* :—We have that redemption which consists in the forgiveness of sins, and having obtained it are delivered from the bondage of the devil, of sin, and of hell. The devil cannot any longer detain us as captives, rule us as his slaves, and drive us here and there as he pleases ; sin itself which cleaves to us cannot reign in us ; finally, even hell cannot torment us with perpetual fear, or claim any lordship over us. For, our sins being remitted, the power of the devil is broken, the wrath of God is removed, the condemnation of eternal death is taken away. From all these things, therefore, we have redemption at the same time that we have forgiveness of sins. But there is yet another bondage, viz., that of the corruption of our bodies, and of eternal sufferings, from which the elect are not yet redeemed, but shall be redeemed at the coming of Christ (Luke xxi. 28). The apostle calls this the redemption of the purchased possession (Eph. i. 14). This also Christ merited for us : but He would not bestow upon believers at once this incorruption of their bodies, and deliverance from present external miseries, and from the remains of sin, for the following reasons. 1. Lest the condition of the Head and of the members should be plainly dissimilar. For Christ Himself was a Man of sorrows : He did not at once sit down at the right hand of the Father in glory, but first underwent hunger, thirst, crucifixion, and death : it is therefore but consistent that the members of Christ should pass likewise through sufferings and death itself to glory. 2. They are not fully redeemed from these bodily afflictions, neither from the remains of sin, that they may have matter for glorifying God, whilst they endure them with the greatest constancy and patience, whilst they resist with all their might all the lusts of sin ; that God, even as a just Judge, may confer upon them, after having well fought this fight, the unfading crown. 3. He would not straightway deliver the faithful from this bodily misery instantly, lest Christians should seem to embrace Christ on account of this temporal deliverance, rather than on account of that spiritual one. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Redemption God's forgiveness as King and Father* :—Suppose that a son had sinned grievously against a parent who was also a king. By the son's breach of the laws he has exposed himself to a certain penalty ; but he has also alienated himself from his father—produced in his heart a spirit of distrust and aversion which becomes deeper and more intense the longer he holds aloof. There are two things then to be considered : the punishment to which the son is liable ; and the depraving, alienating influence which his transgression exercises over his mind. Now, if the breach is ever to be healed, it will not be enough for the father to say, "I remit the penalty of your transgression : I forbear to strike : you may go." The son may, will, be glad to escape suffering, but he will not be drawn thereby in love towards his father. The old alienation will rankle still, and will break out presently in fresh offences. Something more, then, is needed, viz., the exhibition of the father's love towards the erring son ; there is needed that it be said, "I not only release you from merited suffering ; but I forgive you : I open my heart to you, and take you back into it. I am only too glad to welcome you to my heart and home, with the feeling that my child is no longer a wanderer and an alien, but has given me back his love." Then the power of the transgression will be broken, and the interrupted relation between father and child will be restored. Precisely in the same way, if forgiveness of sin meant simply the remission of penalties, there would be in the heart of the sinner nothing but a cold and selfish thankfulness and self-congratulation for escape from pain. But our sins are forgiven us in such a way that the heart of a loving Father is displayed in the act. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) *Redemption atonement for and remission of sin* :—It is the Day of Atonement. Two young kids of the goats are presented before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle. Those young spotless creatures are a double type of Jesus when in the councils of eternity He presented Himself before Jehovah, saying, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." The lot is cast—one for the Lord, the other for the scapegoat—to determine which shall represent our Saviour in the act of His death, and which in the fruit of His death, viz., the bearing of the sins of the people. The first falls as a

sin-offering. The high priest having caught its flowing blood in a golden bowl, enters within the veil, and, alone, sprinkles it upon the mercy-seat. Coming forth, he goes up to the living goat; standing over it, he lays his hands upon its head; and, amid solemn silence, confesses over the dumb creature all the sins of the people. The prayer finished, that goat bears on its devoted head the guilt of the people. And now observe the act which foreshadowed how Jesus by taking our sins bore them away. The congregation opens, forming a lane that stretches away from the tabernacle to the boundless desert. While every lip is sealed, and every eye intent, a "fit" man steps forth, and taking hold of the victim, he leads it on and away through the parted crowd. Amid the haze of the burning sands and distant horizon their forms grow less and less, and at length vanish from sight. He and that goat are now alone. They travel on and further on, till, removed beyond the reach of any human eye, far off in the distant wilderness, he casts loose the sin-laden creature. And when, after the lapse of hours, the people descry a speck in the distance, which draws nearer and nearer, until they recognize the "fit" man, the people see, and we in figure see also, how our Lord, when He was made an offering for sin, took the load of our guilt upon Him, bearing it away, as it were, to a land that was not known. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*)

Pardon, not justice, wanted:—A French girl of fourteen appeared before Napoleon, and casting herself at his feet, cried, "Pardon, sire! pardon for my father!" "And who is your father?" asked Napoleon, "and who are you?" "My name is Lajolia," she said, and with flowing tears added, "but, sire, my father is doomed to die." "Ah, young lady," replied Napoleon, "I can do nothing for you. It is the second time your father has been found guilty against the State." "Alas!" exclaimed the poor girl, "I know it, sire; but I do not ask for justice, I implore pardon. I beseech you to forgive my father!" After a momentary struggle of feeling, Napoleon gently took the hand of the young maiden, and said, "Well, my child, for your sake I will pardon your father. That is enough. Now leave me."

The value of pardon:—A man named John Welsh lay in prison in Chicago under sentence of death. His friends tried to get his sentence commuted to imprisonment for life. The day before that fixed for his execution arrived without any favourable reply being received. The prisoner sat in his cell listening and longing earnestly for a respite. Presently he heard the rumbling of a car. It brought the materials for the scaffold, and soon he heard the stroke of the hammers, and pictured himself hanging on the scaffold he could hear them raising. The sound almost drove him frantic, and he begged that he might be taken anywhere away from the dreadful noise. He was taken to a distant cell, and there he sat on the edge of his bed, haunted with gloomy thoughts, all hope gone. He was startled from his reverie by a hurried step along the corridor. The key was thrust into the lock, and one of the officers of the prison stood before him. He held in his hand a paper signed by the Governor of the State of Illinois. It was a commutation of his sentence. How the truth burst upon his mind! When the paper was handed to him he could not read it for tears, but it was a paper bringing him his life, and he hugged it and kissed it. (*H. W. Taylor.*)

Forgiveness and remission of sins:—Strictly speaking it is not sins that are forgiven, but their penalty. All men know what "to give" is; but what is it to *for-give*? To *forth-give* or give forth. When a man in ancient times forgave, he gave forth from himself something he was entitled to retain. When a man does injury to another he is liable to a penalty, and formerly every penalty short of death consisted of valuable material such as live cattle or money; and it was that, laid at the injured person's feet, that was given forth from the receiver, when he was willing to forgive the injurer. Precisely speaking it was not the injury that was forth-given; the injury was never at the disposal of the injured person. It was the penalty incurred by the injury that was forth-given. And whatever the penalty might be, though death itself, if it was not exacted it was forgiven. So when God forgives He generously refrains from exacting the penalty we have incurred. Another word is remission, which is a beautiful variation. There is *mission* in it. When any one is sent forth some end is contemplated. That end is his mission. *Re* of course means back. To remit is to send back. In ancient times when the material of the penalty of a transgression was sent to the injured person, he had it in his option graciously to send it back. That was the remission of the penalty of the sin. The phrase is now condensed, and we speak not only of the remission of the penalty, but of the remission of the sin. The expression is practically equivalent in Biblical representation

to the word *redemption*, so that the two phrases reciprocally throw light on each other. In this light it is seen that, as a matter of principle, it must always be a difficulty in moral government to give scope to the forgiveness of crimes, or the remission of the penalty of transgressions. No wonder, therefore, that there should be difficulty in the Divine government. (*J. Morison, D.D.*)

Vers. 15-19. Who is the image of the invisible God.—This is the most exhaustive assertion of our Lord's Godhead to be found in St. Paul's writings. This magnificent dogmatic passage is introduced, after the apostle's manner, with a strictly practical object. The Colossian Church was exposed to the attacks of a theosophic doctrine which degraded Christ to the rank of one of a long series of inferior beings supposed to range between man and the Supreme God. Against this assertion Paul asserts that Christ is: I. THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD. The expression supplements the title of "the Son." As "the Son," Christ is derived eternally from the Father, and of one substance with Him. As "the image" Christ is in that one substance, the exact likeness of the Father, in all things except being the Father. He is the image of the Father, not as the Father, but as God. The "image" is indeed originally God's unbegun, unending reflection of Himself in Himself, but is also the organ whereby God, in His essence invisible, reveals Himself to His creatures. Thus the "image" is naturally, so to speak, the Creator, since creation is the first revelation God has made of Himself. Man is the highest point in the visible universe; in man, God's attributes are most luminously exhibited; man is the image and glory of God (1 Cor. xi. 7). But Christ is the adequate image of God, God's self-reflection in His own thought, eternally present with Himself. II. As the image Christ is the FIRST-BORN OF ALL CREATION, *i.e.*, not the first in rank among created beings, but begotten before any created beings. That this is the true sense of the expression is etymologically certain; but it is also the only sense which is in real harmony with the relation in which, according to the context, Christ stands to the universe. Of all things in heaven and earth, of things seen and unseen, of the various orders of the angelic hierarchy, it is said that they were created: 1. In Christ. There was no creative process external to and independent of Him; since the archetypal forms after which the creatures are modelled and the sources of their strength and consistency of being eternally reside in Him. 2. By Him. The force which has summoned the worlds out of nothingness into being, and which upholds them in being is His; He wields it; He is the one producer and sustainer of all created existence. 3. For Him. He is not as Arianism pretended, merely an inferior workman creating for the glory of a higher Master; He creates for Himself; He is the end of all things as well as their immediate source; and in living for Him every creature finds at once the explanation and law of its being. For He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. III. After such a statement it follows naturally that the *FULNESS*, *i.e.*, the entire cycle of the Divine attributes, considered as a series of forces, DWELLS IN HIM; and this not in any ideal or transcendental manner, but with that actual reality which men attach to the presence of material bodies which they can feel and measure through the organs of sense (chap. ii. 9). Although throughout this Epistle the word *Logos* is never introduced, it is plain that the Image of St. Paul is equivalent in His rank and functions to the *Logos* of St. John. Each exists prior to creation; each is the one agent in creation; each is a Divine person; each is equal with God and shares His essential life; each is really none other than God. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The person of Christ:*—I. AS RELATED TO GOD. "Image." Some interpret this of the essential image; others as setting forth Christ as God's messenger, or as perfect man, in allusion to Gen. i. 26. But there is a great difference between man made "in," "after," or "according to" God's image, and Christ "the image" itself. 1. An image (1) differs widely from a shadow. The Old Testament discoveries of Christ are called "shadows," and though a shadow presupposes substance, it is only a mere appearance (Heb. x. 1). (2) Is more than a similitude. One thing may be very similar to another in some things, and yet in others be very unlike. The sun is a similitude, but not an image of God. (3) Corresponds entirely with that which it represents—a perfect model and transcript. The cast is an exact sampler of the mould; the wax bears a correct impress of the seal, not merely in general figure, but in every line. The word therefore shows that Christ is the very form of God in whom are embodied all His perfections. 2. This suggests that (1) the dignity of our Saviour's person stamps infinite merit on His work. (2) Since it is to the Divine image that believers have to be conformed, we have some idea of the privileges and dignity to

which we shall be exalted. (3) In Christ's glorious person we may read our own defects. II. AS RELATED TO THE UNIVERSE. 1. He is Creator: from which it is clear that all things had a beginning, and that nothing exists that does not owe its existence to Christ; and therefore Christ is the lawful proprietor of all things. That there may be no cavil we have a particular enumeration of His works: "(1) In their universality, 'all things'; (2) their properties, 'visible and invisible'; (3) their grades in the scale of being, 'thrones, &c.'" Try to elevate your thoughts to the dignity of this subject. What an Almighty Saviour you have. He is above all human portraiture. His name is "Wonderful." 2. But if Christ be all this, then (1) here is an end of Atheism, Deism, Unitarianism. (2) What a claim have Christ's meanest creatures on our consideration. (3) How desperate their condition who will not have Him to reign over them. III. AS RELATED TO HIS CHURCH. "Head." 1. By Divine appointment; and as the natural head is the highest part of the body, so Christ has in all things the pre-eminence. 2. In respect of His wisdom. The head is the seat of mind. There are all the organs and mental phenomena: the eye to see, &c. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." 3. As regards spiritual sustenance and support. The head is where most of the vital functions are which impart energy through the system, and diffuse pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow. So Christ transmits whatever supplies are required for the Church's welfare; through Him the whole body increases with the increase of God. Lessons: We have a Saviour—1. Almighty. 2. Sympathizing. 3. Everlasting. (T. Watson, B.A.) *The dignity of Christ*.—I. CHRIST IN HIS PRE-INCARNATE STATE. This dignity is represented by two brief clauses dealing with—1. His relation to the God-head, "image." There is a distinction between image and likeness. Likeness represents superficial resemblance, as when two leaves from the same tree are said to be like each other; image indicates resemblance by participation in the same life by reproduction of essence. Likeness is that which is superficial and partial, image that which is essential and exhaustive. Our Lord is that representation of God which God could not but have. Whatever of glory dwells in the Eternal Father is eternally imaged in His Son. 2. His relation to the universe. (1) "In Him all things were made," i.e., the creative energy not only passed through Him, as the volume of a river's waters passes through its rock-hewn channels, but the creative energy dwells in Him, belongs to Him, as the life of His life, essentially and eternally. (2) In Him also all things consist, stand together; in Him the universe finds its unity and coherence. We talk about the laws of nature. If it were possible for us to trace the laws of nature and of history to their point of convergence, we should find that to be nothing less than the personal sovereignty of Jesus Christ. (3) He is the universal Governor. For Him all things exist, to serve His purpose and to manifest His glory. Jesus Christ is the first, efficient, and final cause of all created existence. 3. Now these separate clauses are dove-tailed into the clause preceding them, "the firstborn," for that expression does not mean that our Lord is the first creature, either in time or in rank. The emphasis must be put upon both adjectives, "firstborn." The primacy of Jesus Christ in the creation is the primacy of birth. He alone is born, not made; all other things are made, not born; and there is a very marked distinction between these two. Our thoughts are born of our intelligence; our works are the product of our hands. The things that we make are outside of ourselves; they may perish, and our being be not affected; but the thoughts that are born within us and of us are a part of our being; when you touch them you touch yourself. Our Lord's place in the universe is that of the firstborn; His own being is rooted in the very being of God, as inseparable from Him as thought is from being. Therefore He is called the Eternal Word of God. Thought always precedes achievement, just as a great cathedral is born in the mind of the architect before the click of a chisel is heard. Even so is Christ the first-born of creation as holding in His living thought all the realms and ages. Thus far the essential majesty of the Divine Christ. This is a glory that blinds us, but does not kindle nor transfigure us. II. The apostle passes to the GLORY OF HIM WHO TABERNACLED IN HUMAN FLESH. As creation finds in Him its head, unity, and coherence, so also does the kingdom of grace. These are not two systems, joining each other as two circles might have their contact at a single point, or overlapping, but are one, because the sovereignty of each and both is invested in Christ. 1. In His relation to redemption Christ is "the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead," not the first who came forth from the grave in rank or time. His relation to the kingdom of grace as to that of nature is birth, i.e., in Him the resurrection finds its original and eternal home. It is not merely said that He is risen, but

that He is "the Resurrection and the Life." 2. As He is said to be the source of spiritual creative energy, so also is it declared that the authority of spiritual control is vested in Him. He is Head of the Church, to whom alone our prayers are to be addressed, and through whom alone the answer of God can come to us. Between us and God there are no hierarchies of principalities and powers, no army of saints and martyrs. The way is clear through Christ. There is but one Mediator. Just as the head interprets, gathers up, and responds to the multitudinous demands of the body that are telegraphed along the nervous filaments of sensation, so also does Christ, as the Head of His Church, interpret her needs and respond to her prayers. The heart does not always pray as do the lips, and our wishes are sometimes very different from our wants: but the great Head of the Church knows how to interpret, and always pierces to the deepest need. And so when the strength of our hands fails us, and our wisdom is staggered by the problems that front us, a larger wisdom and a mightier hope come pulsing into our feebleness. 3. Great prerogatives are these, but they are not a temporary investiture. They belong to Him by eternal right, "for it pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell." Grace has in Him its eternal dwelling-place. And so long as the redeemed shall endure will He be their loving and loved Head. For in Him both God and man find their sufficient and eternal reconciliation. 4. This great reconciliation is not merely problematical and partial, it is positive and universal. The tenses are in the past. We are living to-day, not in the dispensation of the wrath of God, but in the dispensation of His redeeming grace. God is sending forth His ministers, bidding all to repent, assuring them that the feast is ready, and that it is only waiting for the guests. The age of demoralization passed away eighteen hundred years ago. The age of reconstruction began when on the cross our Lord said, "It is finished!" That was the burial of the old, as it was the birth of the new; and ever since, and until the end of time, in spite of opposition and apparent defeat, all things have been and shall be working together for good, and surely, though slowly, advancing the cause of God's eternal righteousness. III. PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

1. We have been led by the apostle to the most exalted conceivable position whence we can look out on the works of God and upon the history of the world. We have been led through all the grades of being, from matter in its crudest form to mind in its loftiest manifestation, and we have seen that in Christ the whole universe of created existence finds its unity and coherence, while the awful struggle of right against wrong, truth against falsehood, find in Him its consummation and ending. This is something that neither science nor philosophy can give. In Him all contradictions are solved between the seen and the unseen, the created and the uncreated, the sin of man and the righteousness of God. 2. If it be true that both creation and redemption find in Christ their living centre, then it is also plain that only in proportion as we enter into the mind of Christ can we understand aright either the works of God, or the history of the race, or the revelation of His character and purposes in Scripture. 3. Here, too, is the only solution of the vexed question of Christian union. How shall that unity be brought about? Certainly not by creeds nor by forms. There is only one name, one sign, that can subdue us all, and that is the sign that must conquer the world, the flaming cross of Jesus Christ. When we bow before that, and all our faces are turned reverently toward the One on the throne, then shall enmity perish, and we shall be one, even as He and the Father are one. 4. The incomparable dignity of our Lord should awaken in us a three-fold attachment. (1) It should awaken in us a feeling of reverence. As no one of us would think of standing before a throned king without becoming humility, it behoves us when we come into our Creator's presence to bow with reverence at His feet. (2) But incomparable as is His dignity, it is for ever joined with our common nature; and therefore, while it calls for reverence it also calls for trust. He is the Head of the Church, and therefore we ought to come not only reverently, but confidently and boldly. There ought to be joy as well as reverence in our worship and in our service. (3) This incomparable dignity ought also to fill us with assurance and courage. (*A. J. F. Behrends, D.D.*) *The Divine pre-eminence of Christ:—*
I. CHRIST'S PRE-EMINENCE. 1. His supremacy in relation to God. "Image" means (1) The supreme likeness of God. (2) The supreme representation of God. (3) The supreme manifestation of God. 2. His supremacy in relation to nature. We have (1) His dignity, "firstborn," telling of His age, heirship, authority. (2) His creative and sustaining agency. All is made by Him and consists in Him. In His miracles He was the Divine Ulysses whose use of his love proclaimed him lord. (3) His consummating glory. Creation exists for Him as well as by Him. He is

its end as well as its origin. 3. His supremacy in relation to His Church. He is (1) Its sovereign, "Head"; (2) Its force, "Beginning." (3) Life, "Firstborn from the dead." His risen life is the life of the Church. II. THE EXPLANATION OF HIS PRE-EMINENCE IS HIS DIVINE PLENITUDE. He is the Pleroma, the totality of Divine attributes and powers. 1. In Him are all the Divine resources. He is the fulness of wisdom, power, love. 2. In Him all those resources permanently "dwell." Because He is thus full of God, He must in pre-eminence be fully God. III. THE WORK OF CHRIST IN HIS PRE-EMINENCE AND PLENITUDE IS THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION. 1. Reconcile what? "All things." 2. How? "By the blood of His cross." (U. R. Thomas.) *The glory of the Son*:—There are here three grand conceptions of Christ's relations. I. To GOD. Paul uses language which was familiar on the lips of his antagonists. Alexandrian Judaism had much to say about the "Word," and spoke of it as the Image of God. Probably this teaching reached Colossæ. An image is a likeness as of a king's head on a coin or a face in a mirror. Here it is that which makes the invisible visible. 1. God in Himself is inconceivable and unapproachable. "No man hath seen," &c. He is beyond the sense and above understanding. There is in every human spirit a dim consciousness of His presence, but that is not knowledge. Creatural limitations and man's sin prevents it. 2. Christ is the perfect manifestation of God. Through Him we know all that we can know of God. "He that hath seen Me," &c. The great fathomless, shoreless ocean of the Divine nature is like a "closed sea." Christ is the broad river which brings its waters to men. Our souls cry for the living God; and never will that orphaned cry be answered but in the possession of Christ, in whom we possess the Father also. II. To CREATION. "Firstborn." 1. At first sight this seems to include Him in the great family of creatures as the eldest, but it is shown not to be the intention in the next verse, which alleges that Christ was before, and is the agent of, all creation. The true meaning is that He is firstborn in comparison with, or reference to, all creation. 2. The title implies priority in existence and supremacy. It applies to the Eternal Word and not to His incarnation. 3. The necessary clauses state more fully this relation and so confirm and explain the title. (1) The whole universe is set in one class, and He alone over against it. Four times in one sentence we have "all things" repeated, and traced to Him as Creator and Lord. (a) "In the heavens and earth" is quoted from Genesis, and is intended, as then, to be an exhaustive enumeration of the creation according to plan. (3) "Things visible and invisible" includes the whole under another principle of division—there are visible things in heaven, and may be invisible on earth, but wherever they are He made them. (γ) "Whether thrones," &c., an enumeration alluding to dreamy speculations about an angelic hierarchy filling the space between God and men. (2) The language employed brings into strong relief the manifold variety of relations which the Son sustains to the universe. The Greek means "all things considered as a unity." (a) "In Him," regards Him as the creative centre or reservoir in which all creative force resided, and was in a definite act put forth. The error of the Gnostics was to put the act of creation and the thing created as far away as possible from God, and is here met. (3) But the possible dangers of that profound truth are averted by the preposition "through" Him. That presupposes the clear demarcation between creature and creator, and extricates the person of the firstborn from all risk of being confounded with the creation, while it makes Him the medium of the Divine energy, and so shows His relation to the Divine nature. He is the image of the invisible God, and accordingly through Him have all things been created. "The express image of His person by whom He made the worlds." (γ) "For Him." All things sprung from His will, and return thither again. These relations are more than once declared of the Father. What theory of Christ's person explains the fact? 3. His existence before the creation is repeated. "He" is emphatic, "He Himself"; "is" emphasises not only pre-existence, but absolute existence. "He was" would not have said so much as "He is before all things." "Before Abraham was I am." 4. In Him all things hold together. He is the element in and by which is that continued creation which is the preservation of the universe. He links all creatures and forces into a co-operant whole, reconciling their antagonisms, and melting all their notes into music which God may hear, however discordant it may be to us. III. To THE CHURCH. A parallel is plainly intended between Christ's relation to the material creation and to the spiritual. As is the pre-incarnate word to the universe, so is the incarnate Christ to the Church. 1. Christ the Head and the Church His body. Popular physiology regards the head as the seat of life. So our Lord is the source

of that spiritual life which flows from Him into His members, and is sight in the eye, strength in the arm, swiftness in the foot, colour in the cheek, richly various in its manifestations, but one in its nature and all His. That thought leads to Him as the centre of unity by whom the many members become one body. The head, too, is the symbol of authority. 2. Christ is the beginning of the Church. In nature He was before all, and the source of all. So "the beginning" does not mean the first member of a series, but the power which causes the series to begin. The root is the beginning of flowers, although we may say the first flower is. 3. He is head and beginning by means of His resurrection. (1) He is firstborn from the dead, and His communication of spiritual life to His Church requires the historical fact of His resurrection, for a dead Christ could not be the source of life. (2) He is the beginning through His resurrection, too, in regard to raising us from the dead. He is the firstfruits, and bears promise of a mighty harvest. Because He lives we shall live also. 4. So Paul concludes that in all things He is first, and all things are that He may be first. Whether in nature or grace the pre-eminence is supreme. (*A. MacLaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 15. Christ the Image of the invisible God.—I. CHRIST IS THE IMAGE OF GOD. Image signifies that which represents another, and as things are variously represented, so there is a great variety of images. 1. Some are imperfect, and express but some particular, and that defectively. (1) Artificial images, whether drawn, sculptured, or embroidered, represent only the colour, figure, and lineaments, and have nothing of life and nature. (2) Adam, who was called God's image because the conditions of his nature had some resemblance to the properties of God—intellect, will, and lordship; but he had not God's essence. 2. Some are perfect. We call a child the image of his father, inasmuch as he has not merely the colour or figure of his parent, but his nature and properties, soul, body, life, &c. So a prince has not only the appearance of his predecessor's power, but its substance (Gen. v. 3). 3. In which of these two senses is the figure true of Christ? Surely not in the sense that man is the image of God. For intending to exalt Christ and to show that His dignity is so great as to capacitate Him to save us, it would ill suit his design if the apostle attributed no more to Him than what holds good for any man. Read our Lord's own testimony (John xiv. 9, xii. 45). Now where is the portrait of which it may be said that he who has seen it has seen him whom it represents? This can only be found in one which contains the nature of the original (Heb. i. 3). (1) God's nature is perfectly represented in Christ. Hence He is called God over and over again. (2) Christ represents the Father in His properties, eternity, immutability, wisdom, &c. (3) In His works (John v. 19; Heb. i. 10; John i. 3, &c.). 4. Now no child perfectly represents his father; there are differences of manner, disposition, feature: but Christ represents the Father in everything. 5. This sacred truth overthrows two heresies—the Sabellian and the Arian. The former confounded the Son with the Father, the latter rent them asunder. Those took from the Son His person, these His nature. Paul demonstrates the Sabellian error here, for no one is the image of himself; and the Arian, for Christ could not be a perfect image unless He had the same nature as the Father. **II. GOD, WHOSE IMAGE JESUS IS, IS INVISIBLE.** 1. The Divine nature is spiritual, and hence invisible, inasmuch as the eye sees only corporeal objects. For this cause, Moses, in teaching that there is nothing material in the Divine essence that might be represented by pencil or chisel, remonstrates to them that when God manifested Himself they "saw no similitude" (Deut. iv. 12, 15). Whence He infers they must make no graven image. 2. But the meaning here is also that God is incomprehensible. Seeing is often put for knowing. The Seraphim cover their faces to embody this truth (Isa. vi. 2). Through His grace indeed we may know something of His nature (Heb. i. 1); but however clear it does not amount to a seeing, *i.e.*, an apprehension which conceives the proper form of the subject. 3. Why is this quality mentioned here? To show us that God has manifested Himself to us by His Son. There is a secret opposition between image and invisible. God has a nature so impenetrable that without this His Image men would not have known Him. (1) By Him He made, preserves, and governs the world. To Him we must refer the revelations of God under the Old Testament. (2) But here the reference is to what took place in the fulness of time. In Christ we see all the wonders of the invisible Father—His justice, mercy, power, &c., in all their completeness, whereas creation only shows the edges. (*J. Dailly.*) *The image of God:—We believe in many things we never saw, on the evidence of other senses*

than sight. We believe in music, invisible odours, nay, in what we can neither hear, taste, smell, nor touch—our own life, our soul. Thus it were irrational to disbelieve in God because He is invisible. Still we are tempted to forget His existence, and as for the ungodly “God is not in all their thoughts.” I, I WOULD WARN YOU AGAINST ALLOWING GOD TO BE OUT OF MIND BECAUSE HE IS OUT OF SIGHT. 1. This is a danger to which our very constitution exposes us. Hence the necessity of striving to walk by faith, not by sight. This is difficult because we are creatures of sense. The dead are out of sight and so often forgotten, the eternal world, the devil, and so God. 2. Why should the invisibility of God be turned into a temptation to sin? It should rather minister to holy care. How solemn the thought that an unseen Being is ever at our side! Were this realized, then bad thoughts would be banished, and unholy deeds crushed, and purity and heavenliness imparted to the life and conduct. II. THE VISIBLE REVELATIONS OF THE INVISIBLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE MOST PROBABLY MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SON OF GOD. To Jacob at Peniel, to Joshua at Jericho, to Manoah, to Isaiah (chap. vi.), and to others God appeared. How are we to reconcile this with “No man hath seen God at any time”? Only by regarding these appearances as manifestations of Him who is “the image of the invisible God.” This is in perfect harmony with other passages in the history of redemption. We know for certain that the fruits of the incarnation were anticipated, and the fruits of His death enjoyed before He died. Why not, then, the fact of the incarnation? Viewed in this light, these Old Testament stories acquire a deeper and more enduring interest. In the guide of Abraham’s pilgrimage I see the guide of my own. Jacob’s success in wrestling imparts vigour to my prayers. III. THE GREATNESS OF THE WORKER CORRESPONDS WITH THE GREATNESS OF THE WORK. It is not always so. Sometimes God accomplishes mighty ends by feeble instruments in both nature and grace. But redemption is differentiated in greatness, grandeur, and difficulty from all the other works of God. It cost more love, labour, and wisdom than all yon starry universe. But great as is the work the Worker is greater—the visible Image of the invisible God. IV. GOD AS REVEALED VISIBLY IN JESUS MEETS AND SATISFIES ONE OF OUR STRONGEST WANTS. 1. The second commandment runs more counter to our nature than any other. (1) Look at the heathen world. For long ages the world was given up to idolatry with the exception of a single people. To fix the mind on an invisible Being seemed like attempting to anchor a vessel on a flowing tide. And as a climbing plant, for lack of a better stay, will throw its arms round a rotting tree; rather than want something palpable to which their thoughts might cling, men have worshipped the Divine Being through the most hideous forms. (2) Look at the proneness to sensuous worship among the Jews. (3) We find the evidence of this prosperity in the Christian Church. Fancy some old Roman rising from his grave on the banks of the Tiber, what could he suppose but that the “Eternal City” had changed her idols, and by some strange turn of fortune had given to one Jesus the old throne of Jupiter and assigned the crown which Juno wore in his days to another queen of heaven? 2. In what way are we to account for this universal tendency? It is not enough to call it folly; the feelings from which it springs are deeply rooted in our nature. You tell me that God is infinite, incomprehensible; but it is as difficult for me to make such a Being the object of my affections as to grasp a sound or detain a shadow. This heart craves something more congenial to my nature, and seeks in God a palpable object for its affections to cling to. 3. Now see how this want is met in the Gospel by Him who “knoweth our frame.” In His incarnate Son the Infinite is brought within the limits of my understanding, the Invisible is revealed to my sight. In that eye bent upon me I see Divine love in a form I can feel. God addresses me in human tones, and stands before me in the fashion of a man; and when I fall at His feet with Thomas I am an image worshipper but no idolater, for I bend to the “image of the invisible God.” V. IN WHAT SENSE IS CHRIST THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD? 1. It means much more than mere resemblance; it conveys the idea of shadow less than of substance. I have known an infant bear such a resemblance to his father that what his tongue could not tell his face did; and people struck by the likeness exclaimed, “He is the very image of his father.” Such was Adam in his state of innocence. Now it may be said that as our Lord, like the first Adam, was holy, he is therefore called the image of God; yet that does not exhaust the meaning, nor is it on that account that Paul calls Him the second Adam. Nor have they sounded the depths who say He was so called because He was endowed with power to do the works of God. For many others have been in that sense equally images of God. But where are they represented as “God mani-

fest in the flesh"? 2. In Christ's character and works we have a living, visible, perfect image of the invisible God. (1) In Him we see the power of God, and notably at the grave of Lazarus. To make something out of nothing is a work more visibly stamped with divinity than to make one thing out of another—a living man out of lifeless dust, and then on that mountain side the bread multiplies. (2) In Christ we have the image of a holy God. (3) In Christ we have the image of a God willing and waiting to save. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The image of the invisible God* :—I draw out from my pocket a little miniature, and look upon it and tears drop from my eyes. What is it? A piece of ivory. What is on it? A face that some artist has painted there. It is a radiant face. My history is connected with it. When I look upon it tides of feeling swell in me. Some one comes to me, and says: "What is that?" I say, "It is my mother." "Your mother! I should call it a piece of ivory with water-colours on it." To me it is my mother. When you come to scratch it, and analyze it, and scrutinize the elements of it, to be sure it is only a sign or dumb show, but it brings to me that which is no sign nor dumb show. According to the law of my mind, through it I have brought back, interpreted, refreshed, revived, made patent in me, all the sense of what a loving mother was. So I take my conception of Christ as He is painted in dead letters on dead paper, and to me is interpreted the glory, the sweetness, the patience, the love, the joy-inspiring nature of God; and I do not hesitate to say, "Christ is my God," just as I would not hesitate to say of that picture, "It is my mother." "But," says a man, "you do not mean that you really sucked at the breast of that picture?" No, I did not; but I will not allow any one to drive me into any such minute analysis as that. Now I hold that the Lord Jesus Christ, as represented in the New Testament, brings to my mind all the effluence of brightness and beauty which I am capable of understanding. I can take in no more. He is said to be the express image of God's glory. He reveals to us a God whose interest in man is inherent, and who through His mercy and goodness made sacrifices for it. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for it. What is the only begotten Son of God? Who knows? Who can know? That His only begotten Son is precious to Him we may know, judging from the experience of an earthly father; and we cannot doubt that when He gave Christ to come into life, and humble Himself to man's condition, and take upon Himself an ignominious death, He sacrificed that which was exceedingly dear to Him. And this act is a revelation of the feeling of God toward the human race. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ the image of God* :—There is in Rome an elegant fresco by Gnido—"The Aurora." It covers a lofty ceiling. Looking up at it from the pavement your neck grows stiff, your head dizzy, and the figures indistinct. You soon tire and turn away. The owner of the palace has placed a broad mirror near the floor. You may now sit down before it as at a table, and at your leisure look into the mirror, and enjoy the fresco that is above you. There is no more weariness, nor indistinctness, nor dizziness. Like the Rospiglioso mirror beneath "The Aurora," Christ reflects the glory of the Divine nature to the eye of man. *Christ is intended to be familiarly known* :—The whole value of the gospels to Erasmus lay in the vividness with which they brought home to their readers the personal impression of Christ Himself. "Were we to have seen Him with our own eyes, we should not have so intimate a knowledge as they give us of Christ, speaking, healing, dying, rising again, as it were in our very presence. . . . If the footprints of Christ are shown us in any place, we kneel down and adore them. Why do we not rather venerate the living and breathing picture of Him in these books? . . . It may be the safer course," he goes on, with characteristic irony, "to conceal the state mysteries of kings, but Christ desires His mysteries to be spread abroad as openly as was possible. (*Little's "Historical Lights."*) *The firstborn* :—The expression as it stands is somewhat ambiguous. 1. Does it imply that all creatures have been born, but that Jesus was born before them? Impossible. All human creatures have been born, all at least but the first; and even he was "the son of God" (Luke iii. 38). We are all "God's offspring." But, except in poetry, we can scarcely speak of the birth of the earth, ocean, stars, &c. They have been created, not born; they are the creatures rather than the children of God. 2. Nor can the meaning be first-born within the circle of all creation; for the higher nature of Jesus is not within that circle: it is far above it; before Abraham, and sun, moon, and stars, He was and is. 3. The apostle's idea is that Jesus is the hereditary Lord of the whole creation. The representation is based on the prerogative that is still attached in many lands to primogeniture. That prerogative is great. In virtue of it the first-

born of the Queen is Prince of Wales; of the Emperor of Germany, Crown Prince; of the late Emperor Napoleon, Prince Imperial. In ancient times and among the apostle's people, in the days of their national grandeur, there was a corresponding privilege attached to the royal firstborn. And hence in the course of time the word came to be so employed that the ideas of birth and priority of birth got sometimes to be merged out of sight, while the ideas of special hereditary privilege, prerogative, and honour stood prominently forth. Hence God said to Pharaoh, "Israel is My son, My firstborn," because they were in distinction from other peoples the recipients of the advantages which were the natural prerequisites of primogeniture. Again in Jer. xxxi. 9 the idea of priority in birth is entirely shaded off, for that priority could not be affirmed of Ephraim—the reference is to peculiarity of prerogative and honour. Take again Heb. xii. 22, 23. Here Christians are called the firstborn, and not Christians in heaven, for they are distinguished from the "spirits of just men made perfect," but Christians on earth. All such Christians, though scattered, and variously denominated, are "the one general assembly and Church of the firstborn." This shows that the term may be and is used without priority of birth, and in the sense of being God's very highly-favoured children. All the blessings of primogeniture are theirs because they are Christ's, the Firstborn. As He is the Crown Prince of the universe, the Prince Imperial and hereditary Lord of the whole creation, they are constituted joint heirs with Him of the "inheritance incorruptible," &c. Again, this interpretation is supported by Rom. viii. 29. "Firstborn among many brethren" is a notable expression. We cannot suppose that God desired to secure the Saviour a relation of chronological priority. Jesus was already before all. The idea is that it was the aim of God to remove from the peerless Son the condition of solitariness in the parental and heavenly home. This aim was accomplished by surrounding Him with a circle of multitudinous brethren, bearing the familiar family likeness, who might be sharers with Him in His inheritance of glory. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Christ is one of us*:—On the centenary of the birth of Robert Stephenson, there was a very large demonstration at Newcastle. The town was paraded by a vast procession who carried banners in honour of the distinguished engineer. In the procession there was a band of peasants, who carried a little banner of very ordinary appearance, but bearing the words, "He was one of us." They were inhabitants of the small village in which Robert Stephenson had been born, and had come to do him honour. They had a right to a prominent position in that day's proceedings, because he to whom so many thousands did honour was one of them. Even so, whatever praise the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers can ascribe to Christ in that grand celebration when time shall be no more, we from earth can wave our banners with the words written on them, "He was one of us."

Ver. 16. By Him were all things created.—I. SOME OF THOSE CASES WHICH ILLUSTRATE THE HARMONY BETWEEN NATURAL RELIGION AND OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH. 1. The doctrine of the being of a God. I do not need to open the Bible to learn that. It is enough that I open my eyes, and turn them on the book of nature, where it stands legibly written on every page. 2. So also is the doctrine that man is a sinner. It is enough to open my heart, or read in the light of conscience the blotted record of my past life. 3. Such also is the doctrine that sin deserves punishment. Hell is no discovery of the Bible. In vain do men flee from Christianity to escape what their uneasy conscience feels to be a painful doctrine. 4. Such also is the doctrine that man cannot save himself. In what country or what age of heathenism does man appear standing erect before his God, demanding justice? In none. All her temples had vicarious sacrifices and atoning altars. 5. Such also is the doctrine that the soul survives death. This hope has been a star that shone in every sky, a flower that bloomed in the poorest soil. Although it cannot be said that the doctrine of the resurrection is to be placed in the same class with those universal fixed beliefs, yet may not the feelings which prompt to such tender care of the lifeless body have suggested the idea? Different from these, the doctrine of God incarnate is one which nature nowhere teaches us. Our proofs of this must be sought for in Scripture. In illustration of this remark, notice that—II. THE WORD OF GOD BOTH HERE AND ELSEWHERE ASCRIBES THE WORK OF CREATION TO JESUS (1 Cor. viii. 6; Eph. iii. 9; John i. 3). Our Lord has been connected with creation sometimes more in beautiful fancies than in plain facts. There is a flower, e.g., which the piety of other days associated with the piety and love of Calvary. In the form and arrangement of its parts it presents such a remarkable

resemblance to the cross and nails, enriched by a halo of floral glory, that, as if originally made to anticipate and afterwards left to commemorate our Redeemer's sufferings, it has received the name of the *passion flower*. And I remember how, in wooded dell, or on brown heather hill, we were wont to pull up a fern, and having cut its root across wonder on the initials Jesus Christ printed there on the wounded stem. And when the mariner, leaving our northern latitudes, pushes southward, he sees a starry cross emerging from the deep; and as his course tends further it rises higher in the heavens, till, when the pole-star has dipped beneath the wave, he gazes with awe and wonder at the sign of salvation blazing above his head. In these things a devout superstition sought to gratify its affections. It is not, however, in these fancies that we seek or see our Lord's connection with nature. But as, with the genius that aspires to immortality, the painter leaves his name in the corner of the canvas, so Inspiration, dipping her pen in indelible truth, has inscribed the name of Jesus on all we see—on sun and stars, flower and tree, rock and mountain, the unstable waters and the firm land; and also on what we do not see—angels and spirits, the city and heavens of the eternal world. This is not fancy, but fact. No voice ever sounded more distinctly than that of revealed truth proclaiming the Creatorship of Jesus, and hence His Lordship of all. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Christ the Creator*.—I. CONSIDER THE STATEMENT ITSELF. 1. Heaven itself was created by and for Christ Jesus. (1) There is such a place, as well as such a state, and of that place Jesus is the centre. (2) It was created for Jesus, and for the people whom He will bring there to be one for ever with Himself. (3) It exists by Jesus and for Jesus. (a) Prepared by Jesus. He is the designer of it. (b) Reflects Jesus. He is the soul of it. (c) Praises Jesus. He is the King of it. 2. The angels. All their ranks were made by Him and for Him. (1) To worship Him, and glorify Him with their adoration. (2) To rejoice with Him and in Him, as they do when sinners repent. (3) To guard Christ's people in life, and bring them to Him in death. (4) To carry out His purposes of judgment, as with Pharaoh, &c. (5) To achieve His purposes of deliverance, as Peter from prison. 3. This world was made by Him to be—(1) A place for Him to live and die upon. (2) A stage for His people to live and act upon. (3) A province to be fully restored to His dominion. (4) A new world in the ages to come, to bless other worlds, if such there be; and to display, for ever, the glories of Jesus. 4. All the lower creatures are for Jesus. "And that are in earth." (1) They are needful to man, and so to our Lord's system of grace. (2) They are illustrations of Christ's wisdom, power, and goodness. (3) They are to be treated kindly for His sake. 5. Men were created by and for Christ. (1) That He might display a special phase of power and skill, in creating spiritual beings embodied in material forms. (2) That He might become Himself one of them. (3) That He might Himself be the Head of a remarkable order of beings who know both good and evil, are children of God, are bound to God by ties of gratitude, and are one with His Son. (4) That for these He might die: to save them, and to make them His companions, friends, and worshippers for ever. (5) That human thrones, even when occupied by wicked men, might be made to subserve His purpose by restraint or by overruling. II. REVIEW THE REFLECTIONS HENCE ARISING. 1. Jesus, then, is God. "By Him were all things created." 2. Jesus is the clue of the universe; its centre and explanation. All things are to be seen in the light of the cross, and all things reflect light on the cross. For Him all things exist. 3. To live to Jesus, then, is to find out the true object of our being, and to be in accord with all creation. 4. Not living to Jesus, we can have no blessing. 5. We can only live for Him as we live by Him, for so all things do. 6. It is clear that He must triumph. All is going well. If we look at history from His throne, all things are "for Him." "He must reign." Let us comfort one another with these words. What an honour to be the smallest page in the retinue of such a prince! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Advent in Creation*.—A very narrow notion of the functions of Christ is afloat in the atmosphere of popular religious thought, though not formulated into dogmatic phrases. It is that our Lord is limited in work and even in nature to the mission of redemption. Such an idea implies that Christ is dependent on the existence of sin, and that His very being is but an expedient required for the deliverance of man. So stated the doctrine is monstrous. If there had been no sin, Christ would have visited the world in some way of Divine goodness. He came in the creation before the birth of sin. I. THE FACT. 1. As regards the relation of Christ to creation. This is threefold. (1) In Christ is the fundamental basis of creation. "In Him," i.e., His thoughts, are the archetypes of the worlds and their

contents, and the genesis of them follows the principles of His nature. (2) Christ is the instrumental agent of creation "through Him." He is the Mediator in creation as well as redemption. (3) Christ is the end of the creation. "Unto Him," i.e., all things grow into His likeness, they move upwards towards the realization of His life. Christ in His human nature was the highest development of the upward movement of creation. They are also destined to serve and glorify Him. 2. As regards the scope and range of the work of Christ. This was universal in creation. It included: (1) All things visible and invisible, i.e., physical and spiritual existences, or things within our observation and the infinite population of the spaces beyond. (2) All orders of being, "thrones," &c., none too great for His power, none too small for His care. (3) Every variety and every individual. Different classes are specified. Creation is not a work merely of general laws, it implies individual formation under them. II. INFERENCES. 1. As regards Christ. (1) His pre-existence. That which was Divine in Christ was before all things. The Christ-side of God, all that is so touching and winning in the marvellous revelation of God in Jesus, is no new phase of His character. It was before the sterner revelation of Sinai. It is eternal (Heb. xiii. 8). (2) His glory. All that is great and beautiful in creation glorifies Him through whom it came into existence. 2. As regards the creation. (1) This must be in harmony with Christ. Therefore—(a) We must interpret its darker phases by what we know of the spirit and character of Christ. (b) We must expect that ultimately its laws and forces will make for Christianity, breathing benedictions on the faithful followers of Christ, and bringing natural penalties on those who rebel against His rule. (2) We should endeavour to trace indications of the presence of Christ in nature. (W. J. Adeney, M.A.) *The work of creation by and for Jesus Christ*.—I. CHRIST IS THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS. Whatever is the act of creation it must be the Divine act; and whoever is the Creator He must be Divine. 1. Creation is always averred to be a Divine act (Gen. i. 1, &c.). It answers to our idea of the highest omnipotence, for "the things which are made were not made of the things which do appear." 2. The creating act is always set before us as the basis on which the exclusive honours of the Deity are challenged. (1) God puts His right to worship on this act. (2) He suspends the veracity of His statements on it. (3) His majesty and pre-eminence are made to depend upon it. 3. The creating act is always represented as designed to manifest the glory of Him by whom it was done. "For thy pleasure they are and were created." "The heavens declare the glory of God." 4. The creating act constitutes the very groundwork of natural religion. "We will wait upon Thee, for Thou hast made all these things." 5. There is a validity stamped upon all the blessings of revelation, because they issue from Him who is this universal Creator. The great blessings of the gospel are placed in immediate connection with this omnific act. (1) Reconciliation. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us." (2) Atonement. "It became Him, for whom are all things," &c. (3) Illumination. "God, who hath commanded the light to shine," &c. (4) Protection. Let us commit our souls to Him as a faithful Creator. 6. Idolatry is reprobated on this exclusive ground, that it is offered to those who are not the makers of the universe. "Worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator." 7. Creation is always considered an unassisted act. "I am the Lord that maketh all things." 8. Now, without any qualification or exception, creation is attributed to Christ; how, then, can we deny Him to be Divine? II. ALL THINGS WERE CREATED FOR CHRIST, AND FORM HIS RIGHT AND PREROGATIVE. 1. There are two forms of the Divine foreknowledge. (1) God is acquainted with actions however future. (2) God realizes in His own mind what would be the issue of circumstances had they been different from what they are. "They would have repented long ago." 2. We are assured, then, that this universe being created for Christ was not a supplementary design upon some previous arrangement that had been tried and had failed. This is our method, not God's. Christ wrought this instrument, and it shall go on in His service. 3. Foreseeing sin He made the world in which it was to be vanquished, and hence we read of God's eternal purpose, and of "the Lamb which was foreordained before the foundation of the world." The world is still in revolt, but the eternal purpose shall be accomplished, and all the forces of nature and history shall contribute to it. 4. More particularly all things are created for Christ, inasmuch as—(1) They furnish the scenes of His mediation. "Lo, I come!" The earth claimed His birth, life, and entombment. He made it the seat of His Church. Here is the sphere of His Spirit's influence. This is the receptacle of His most complacent operations, where He is

satisfied for all the travail of His soul. This is the arena of His spiritual victories. (2) They are tributaries to His praise. All things are created to do Him direct homage. Angels do; the redeemed will; devils and sinners shall. III. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO PROPOSITIONS. That Christ is the Creator and Proprietor of all things. 1. This is shown by arguing the difficulty of our redemption, because only the Creator could surmount it. 2. The sufficiency of that redemption because the Creator has wrought it. (R. W. Hamilton, LL.D.) *Christ the end of creation*:—I. The text furnishes a PROOF OF OUR LORD'S DIVINITY. 1. He is in the position of a servant who works for others; He is a Master who, by other hands or His own, works for Himself. Look at the condition of man. Whatever office he fills in Providence he is a servant, and on crowned monarchs, who are but upper servants, Paul lays the duty of doing all to the glory of God. Nor do angels, although holding a much higher rank, differ from us in this respect. "I am thy fellow-servant." "The Lord hath made all things for Himself." This prerogative is held by Christ. 2. Some have attempted to evade the argument for our Lord's Divinity based on the fact of creation. The objectors say that He created by such power as Elijah received from God to restore the widow's son, &c. But the text cuts the ground under their feet. Did Elijah bring back the dead for himself and his own glory? If Christ was less than God, then in kindling the sun He no more acted for Himself than a domestic does in kindling a fire. It is the nature of a creature to hold a servant's place. Now if Jesus were man He was justly condemned, for He laid Himself open to the charge of blasphemy, since, as the Jews truly averred, He made Himself the Son of God, "equal with God." To the "all Mine are Thine," Christ added "Thine are Mine." All that is God's is Christ's, is the consistent testimony of the New Testament. II. THE GLORY OF GOD WAS THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF CREATION. Sin had to some extent blighted the beauty of creation. Still the Psalmist said, "The heavens declare," &c., and the closer we examine the works of God, the higher our admiration rises. "The whole earth is full of His glory." Some things remain unaffected by the blight of sin, as God made them for Himself; the flowers have lost none of their fragrance, and seas and seasons, obedient to their original impulse, roll on as of old to their Maker's glory. But from man, alas! how is the glory departed! Look at his body when the light of his eye is quenched; or look at his soul. What glory does God get from many of us! III. GOD WILL MAKE EVEN THE WICKED AND THEIR SINS REDOUBT TO HIS GLORY. A strange machine is this of Providence. Virtue is struggling with the temptations of poverty, the wicked are in great power, spreading like a green bay-tree. Sin triumphs, and devils seem to defeat the purposes of God. Defeat the purposes of God! Impossible. Did you ever stand beneath the leaden lowering cloud, and mark the lightnings leap, and think that you could grasp the bolt and change its path? Still more foolish and vain his thought who fancies that he can arrest God's purposes. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. Do you, e.g., injure a godly man? God is using you to train up His child in the grace of patience. Messenger of Satan! dost thou buffet an apostle? God uses thee to keep him humble, and to teach him to wear his honours meekly. No man liveth for himself. The most bold and God-hating sinners may rest assured that when the machine of Providence has done its work, and the secret purposes of God are fully completed, it shall be seen how the Lord hath made all things for Himself. IV. SINCE CHRIST HATH MADE ALL THINGS FOR HIMSELF, HIS PEOPLE ARE CALLED TO CONSECRATE THEMSELVES AND THEIR ALL TO HIS GLORY. To this we are called by the obligations of both a natural and spiritual creation. This may expose us to pain; but what pain Jesus endured for us! What owest thou unto thy Lord? You cannot tell that; therefore lay your all at His feet. He who lives for Christ has one end in view which lends dignity to his life. Glorify Christ and you shall enjoy Him. (T. Guthrie, D.D.) What is said of the Father in 1 Cor. viii. 6, the same is here said of the Son. All things must find their meeting-point, their reconciliation, at length in Him from whom they took their rise—in the Word as the mediatorial agent, and through the Word in the Father as the primary source. The Word is the final cause as well as the creative agent of the universe. This ultimate goal of the present dispensation in time is similarly stated in several passages. It is represented—1. As the birth-throe and deliverance of all creation through Christ (Rom. viii. 19, &c.). 2. The absolute and final subjection of universal nature to Him (1 Cor. xv. 28). 3. The reconciliation of all things through Him (ver. 20). 4. The gathering in one head of the universe in Him (Eph. i. 10). The Eternal Word is the goal of the universe, as He was the starting-

point. It must end in unity, as it proceeded from unity, and the centre of this unity is Christ. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) "*Thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers*":—The Colossian heretics seem to have held that all matter was evil, and that therefore the material creation could not have come directly from a good God, but was in a certain sense opposed to Him, or at all events separated from Him by an immense gulf. The void space was bridged by a chain of beings, half abstractions and half persons, gradually becoming more and more material. The lowest of them had created the material universe and now governed it, and were all to be propitiated by worship. Paul opposes the solid truth to these dreams, and instead of a crowd of powers and angelic beings in whom the effulgence of Deity was gradually darkened, and the spirit became more and more thickened into matter, he lifts high and clear against that background of faith the solitary figure of the one Christ. He fills all the space between God and man. There is no need for a crowd of shadowy beings to link heaven with earth. There is a tone of contemptuous impatience in Paul's voice as he quotes the pompous list of sensuous titles which a busy fancy had coined. It is as if he had said, You are being told a great deal about these angel hierarchies, and know all about their ranks and gradations. I do not know anything about them; but this I know, that if, amid the unseen things in the heavens or the earth, there be any such, my Lord made them, and is their Master. He is first and last in all things, to be listened to, loved, and worshipped by men. As when the full moon rises, so when Christ appears, all the lesser stars with which Alexandrian and Eastern speculation had peopled the abysses of the sky are lost in the mellow radiance, and instead of a crowd of flickering ineffectual lights there is one perfect orb, "and heaven is overflowed." "We see no creature any more save Jesus only." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 17. By Him all things consist.—That is, Christ upholds, rules, and governs all things by His providence, as is shown elsewhere (Heb. i. 2, 3; Prov. viii. 15; John v. 12). Christ is not like a carpenter that makes his house and then leaves it, or like a shipwright that frames his ship and never guides it. I. ALL THINGS ARE SAID TO CONSIST IN HIM in respect of 1—Conservation: in that He keeps all things in their being. 2. Precept: in that from Him are prescribed the laws by which nature, policy, and religion are governed. 3. Operation: in that all things move in Him. 4. His position of means to end. 5. As the universal cause of nature and natural instincts in all creatures, by which they further their own preservation. II. IN HIM all things consist. 1. As He is God—(1) In respect of ubiquity; He comprehends all things, and is comprehended of nothing. The nations are but a drop of His bucket, and time but a drop of His eternity. (2) In respect of power; in that this whole frame stirreth. (3) In respect of omniscience and wisdom, for all is within His knowledge, and receiveth order from His wisdom. (4) In respect of decree, for the world to be made did from everlasting hang in the foreknowledge and pre-ordination of Christ. 2. As He is Redeemer. All things consist in Him—(1) Because He is that atonement which kept the world from being dissolved. (2) Because the respect of Him and His Church is that which keeps up the world to this day. Were His body complete the world could not stand one hour. (3) Because the promise made to man concerning His prosperity in the use of all creatures is made in Christ. III. IN HIM all things consist. Which word notes—1. Order. By an excellent order the creatures agree together in a glorious frame; for God is the God of order, not of confusion. (1) But are there not many evils in the world? (a) There may be order in respect of God, though not in respect of us. (b) It follows not that there is no order because we see none (Rom. xi. 33). (c) Many of the reasons of human misery are revealed—sin entailing punishment. (d) There may be order in respect of the whole, though not in respect of every part. (2) But there are many sins in the world, and those consist not in Christ, neither tend they to order. (a) These are restrained by Christ. (b) Work out His purposes. 2. Continuance. The world, men, and lower creatures, &c., are maintained in being by Christ. 3. Co-operation. By the providence of Christ all things work together. (1) For Christ's glory; (2) for His people's good. 4. Immortality. Uses—1. For reproof of men's security in sin. Seeing that all things consist in Christ, they cannot stir but He seeth them. 2. It should teach us to trust in Christ, not in second causes. 3. If all things consist in Christ, then much more are the righteous preserved with a special preservation. (*N. Byfield.*) All things exist in Christ:—All things stand together in Him as the causal and conditional sphere of their continued existence. In Him they live

and move and have their being, and in Him the sustentation or upholding of the universe rests. How wondrous, then, the glory and power of the Son of God! Without Him the sun would not shine, nor the seasons revolve; without Him the rain would not descend, nor the rivers run, nor the trees grow, nor the oceans ebb and flow. His power is necessary to summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, to earth and sky. He upholdeth all things by the word of His power, and without Him creation would collapse. Every province of the empire of immensity, with all its contents of life, force, and motion, depends on Him. The intellect of angels reflects His light, the fire of seraphs is the glow of His love, the energy of our own souls is an evidence of His beneficence and skill. In Him all things consist—the power of their support, the primal centre of their order, the rule of their operation. This is the Being in whom we have redemption. What sublimity His greatness sheds around the gospel! What moral richness His gospel throws around nature and humanity! How lofty should be our adoration, how strong our confidence, how warm our love, how complete our submission! (*J. Spence, D.D.*)

Ver. 18. And He is the Head of the body, the Church.—*Christ and His Church*:—I. THE CHURCH. 1. The English word is formed from *κυριακή*—belonging to the Lord. (1) Sometimes a distinction is drawn between Church and congregation. Although Christ is Lord of all, yet He bears a peculiarly endearing relationship to the company within the congregation who constitute the Church proper. They are His “peculiar” possession, people, servants, and friends. (2) Sometimes we call the edifice in which the disciples assemble a church, and properly, because it belongs to the Lord. 2. The word is a translation of *ἐκκλησία*, and is peculiarly applicable to the people as distinguished from the place. It was borrowed from those Greeks who had free municipal institutions. Slaves were not permitted to form part of the company, and were not eligible to municipal offices and honours, and had no voice or vote. A church, therefore, is a company of free men. 3. The two meanings in combination reach the idea that the Church of Christ is the company of free men whose privilege it is to belong to the Lord. 4. Christians are a “body,” an organized community, in which all the members, however humble, find a place and do a work, and not a mere heterogeneous mob. Each member can be helpful to the others. II. THE HEAD. This implies—1. That Christ belongs to the body, the Church. He is not outside and merely over it. He is within it as its principal member. He partakes of its moral nature, and then of the moral nature of all its members. He is free as they are, only more gloriously; it is His joy also to be useful, only His devotion is far more sublime. 2. The representation is incomplete. He is Heart too—both head and heart in one; even as He is corner-stone at every corner, and all round the Temple of God. As the Heart, He is the centre of all the vitalizing influences that build the whole body into the fulness of health and vigour; the fountain of the love which is the sweetest outcome of manhood. 3. As the Head, He thinks for the whole body, and plans and guides. The hands cannot think for themselves, though they are noble workers; the feet do not know where to go, but beautiful are they when running errands at the bidding of the love that is in the heart, or of the life that emanates from the head. III. THE BEGINNING. Of what? Jesus was “the beginning of the creation of God.” Here He is at once—1. The beginning of the resurrection life, being Himself “the firstborn from among the dead,” and thus—2. The beginning of the Church of the living God; the Head of that body in which, even as it exists on earth, there is a spring-seed of that higher life that has been brought within the reach of all. IV. Christ is consequently eminently qualified to have in all things the PRE-EMINENCE. It was the Father's pleasure that he should have it. He has it now as His right, and will continue so to have it, until all opposition to its rule be swept away for ever. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Christ the Head of the Church*:—I. CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH IN EACH OF HIS NATURES. For here He is called the Head of the Church, who had before been called the image of the invisible God. But that image was the eternal Son of God, the incarnate Word; therefore Christ, the God-man, is the Head of the Church. For the Church ought to possess such a head as might have a natural conformity with the rest of the members to be incorporated in it. Now this conformity suits Christ according to His human nature; whence Christ and the Church are called one flesh (*Eph. v. 31*). But it was also necessary that the Church should have such a head as could infuse into it spiritual life. This is the province of God alone; whence God is plainly called the husband and the Head of the Church (*Psa. xlv. 10*). Hence

many observations arise: 1. Whereas the Head of the Church is God, we infer (1) that the Church will abide for ever, neither shall the gates of hell prevail against it; for if God be with us, who shall be against us? A less than God would have been incompetent to the protection of the Church; for the devil, and almost the whole world, wage constant war against it. (2) That the members of the Church ought to obey their Head in all things. For there is an infinite obligation which binds every creature to obey its God; but that obligation, if possible, surpasses infinite, whereby the Church, redeemed and sanctified, is bound to be subject to its God, its mystical and life-giving Head. (3) That the ascension of Christ into heaven has not deprived the Church of its Head: nay, He is present, and will be always present, with His whole Church, by the power of His Divinity, although He may not appear to our eyes by His bodily presence. 2. Inasmuch as our Head is a man, we infer two things: (1) On account of His alliance of nature, He must of necessity intimately love us, and have such a keen sense of our miseries as to be most ready to succour us (Judg. x. 16; Heb. ii. 17, 18). (2) We have this comfort, that every ground of triumphing over us is taken from the devil. He overcame the first Adam, the head of the race; but the Second Adam, the Head of the Church, overcame him. Nay, in Christ, we who are His members conquer, just as in Adam we were conquered. II. IN WHAT RESPECTS CHRIST IS CALLED THE HEAD. 1. The head differs from its members—(1) In eminence or dignity. The head possesses more perfectly all the senses than the subordinate members; so Christ, the mystical Head, possesses all spiritual grace more abundantly than men and angels put together (John iii. 34). (2) In way of direction or government. The head regulates and directs; the members are ruled and directed. So Christ has the absolute government of the Church (Eph. v. 22, 23). (3) In way of causality or influence. For the head communicates sense and motion to all its members. So Christ sends forth spiritual life and the motion of grace into His members which are otherwise insensible, dead, and destitute of all spiritual motion (John xv. 5; Phil. iv. 13). 2. Those things in which the agreement of the head and the members is perceived. (1) The natural head hath a natural conformity with the rest of the members; for as Horace hath rightly said, it would be monstrous and ridiculous “if a painter should form a design of uniting a horse’s neck to a human head.” Thus monstrous would it be if the Head of the Church had not a natural conformity with the Church. But Christ hath this, as is shown (Heb. ii.). (2) The head and the members have a conformity in their destination to the same end, *viz.*, the preservation and safety of the whole person: thus Christ, and His members, which are one person, are ordained to the attainment of eternal glory and happiness; and to the accomplishment of this end both head and members assiduously co-operate. This is the care of the Head, to lead its members to final blessedness (John xvii. 12). Hence He is called the Saviour of the body (Eph. v. 23). (3) They agree in the circumstance of their having a continuous union with each other, and all of them deriving their motion and intellectuality from the same soul. So this mystical Head, and all the members of it, have a certain mutual continuity, and have their spiritual intellectuality and vivifying principle from the same source. For there is between Christ and His members an uninterrupted union by means of the Holy Spirit (Eph. iv. 16). III. WHO AND WHAT ARE THEY OUT OF WHOM THE BODY OF CHRIST IS COMPOSED? 1. The term Church is derived from a word signifying “to call out”; it is therefore an assembly of those called out. And this calling is effected by the ministry of the gospel, and other means which God has appointed. 2. This external vocation and profession constitutes the visible Church. But there is also another more effectual vocation joined to this in some persons, namely, by grace implanted through the power of the Spirit in the hearts of the called. 3. Then it follows—(1) That those who stand related to the Church as evil humours to the human body are not true members of the Church; for each sound body desires the preservation of its members; but it does not preserve evil humours, but expels them. (2) That those who stand related to the Church as dead men to humanity are not true members of the Church; such as wicked men and infidels. (3) That those whom the Church itself would not acknowledge as members or its parts, if it knew what they are, Christ, who knows all things, does not acknowledge. (4) That the Church, which is the body of Christ, hath no member which doth not receive a vital influx from the Head: for the same Spirit is diffused from the Head to all the members (Rom. viii. 9). But infidels and the wicked have not this vitality of grace flowing from the Head. (5) That the same man is not at the same time a member of Christ and of the

devil; but the wicked men are numbered amongst the servants and the children of the devil (John viii. 38, 44), therefore they are not to be reckoned among the members of Christ. 4. We conclude, therefore, that this body of the Church, of which Christ Himself is the Head, does not consist of any unfaithful and wicked members, but of the pious and holy alone; whom God delivers from the power of darkness, and translates into the kingdom of His dear Son. 5. Hence we may learn—(1) It is not sufficient for salvation to be a member of any visible Church by an outward profession of faith, unless you are a member of the Catholic Church by a true faith and the Spirit dwelling in the heart. (2) It is not befitting Christians to envy those who are endowed with the more excellent gifts; because they are members of the same body: what, therefore, is conferred on one, that should be esteemed as given to all. (3) Since godly members are of the same body, it behoves them to be ready to assist each other; and they ought to feel equally affected with the good or evil which fall to others as with their own (1 Cor. xii. 26). (*Bp. Davenant.*) *The Head of the Church.*—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY OUR LORD'S HEADSHIP? 1. His representation of the Church as a body. At the first creation God dealt with the race as represented in Adam—hence original sin. In order to salvation, which was only possible, perhaps, because we did not fall singly, God instituted a second federation, of which Christ is the Head, the second Adam. Christians are chosen, accepted, and preserved in Him. 2. Our Lord is Head in a mystical sense (Col. ii. 19). (1) The head is indispensable to life; so Jesus is the vitalizing Head of all His people. "He is our life." Separation from Him is spiritual death. (2) The head is the throne of supreme government. It is from the brain that the mandate issues which uplifts the hand, &c. Thus in the Church Christ is the great directing Head; from Him the only binding commands go forth; to Him the spiritual yield a cheerful homage. (3) The head is the glory of the body. There the chief beauty of manhood dwells. Christ is fairer than the children of men, and in Him the beauty of the Church is summed up. 3. Christ's Headship is conjugal. He is the Bridegroom, the Church is His Bride. As the husband exercises headship in the house, not at all tyrannical or magisterial, but founded upon the rule of nature and endorsed by the consent of love, so Christ rules in His Church, not as a despot compelling His subject bride against her will, but as a husband well beloved, obtaining obedience from the heart. 4. Christ is Head as King in Zion. "One is your Master," &c. To no other do we render spiritual obeisance. Martyrs have bled for this truth. Some Churches have not learned it. II. WHAT IT IMPLIES. Since Christ is Head of the Church—1. He alone can determine doctrines for her. It is nothing that a doctrine comes down with gray antiquity to make it venerable. All the fathers, divines, and confessors put together cannot add a word to the faith once delivered to the saints. Nothing is doctrine to the Church but what is contained in the Scriptures. 2. He only can legislate for the Church. In a state, if a knot of persons should profess to make laws for the kingdom they would be laughed at; if they should attempt to enforce them they would be amenable to punishment. So the Church has no power to make laws for herself since she is not her own head; and no one has any right to make laws for her but Christ. 3. He is the living administrator in the Church; but as monarchs often administer through lieutenants, so Christ administers through His Spirit who dwells in the hearts of His people. When we search the Law Book He is their guide. 4. This sole authority must be maintained rigorously. (1) Some would have us guided by results. It has been discussed whether missions should continue since there are so few converts. But how can the question be raised when He has said, "Go ye into all the world," &c. (2) We are not to be guided by the times. Our King and laws are the same, and let the times be scientific or barbaric, our duty is the same. III. ON WHAT DOES IT REST? 1. On the natural supremacy of Christ's nature. He is perfect man and God over all blessed for ever. 2. On His redemption. 3. On His conquest. 4. On the Divine decree (Psa. ii.). IV. WHAT DOES IT TEACH? 1. Does it not make each inquire, "If the entire Church is to yield this obedience, am I yielding it"? 2. Am I in the habit of judging according to my wishes or according to the Statute Book of the King? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The body and its Head.*—What striking figures are employed to describe the union between Christ and His Church! 1. They are the flock, He is the Shepherd (John x. 11-14). They are the bride, He is the Bridegroom (Rev. xxi. 2-6). 3. They are the branches, He is the Stem. 4. Here, and elsewhere, they are the body, He the Head. I. How close the connection between the head and the body. Yet as close is that between Christ and His Church. Not only is it

near and dear to Him, it is identified with Him (Eph. i. 23). His human body was not less necessary to His completeness as a man than His Church is to the completeness of His glory. It was much for Christ to notice, more to pity, more still to die for sinners, but to draw so near to them as this—well may Paul call it a great mystery. II. What a **FELLOW FEELING** there is between the body and the head! Is a man's body in pain, and does not the head know and feel, and the tongue complain? So when the Church suffers the Saviour feels (Heb. iv. 15; Matt. xxv. 40). III. What a beautiful **CONFORMITY**; how exactly is the head proportioned to the body, and how precisely is it suited in its make to the body's wants! Suppose the head of a brute were affixed, not only would the sight be monstrous, but that which the body's fashion renders necessary could never be supplied. And is not the Head of this Church exactly what it wants? Christians need Almighty succour and support, such as could be given by no merely human head. IV. What an **EMINENT STATION** does the head occupy, when by its various senses and faculties it is capable of regulating and directing all our movements! So Jesus is made "Head over all things to His Church," that He may preside over all its concerns, and order the whole course of its events. He sees, hears, speaks, and thinks for it. It is guided by His eye, directed by His wisdom, recommended by His intercession. V. The human head **MAY BE SEPARATED** from the body. Hence the body in that case dies. But the Church cannot die because no separation can take place between it and its Head (Rom. viii. 35-39). Conclusion—1. Is the Head gone up into heaven? Then the members will follow. 2. Are we members of this body? not members of the visible Church, nor professors of Christianity. 3. This union is effected by faith, cemented by love, and exhibited in obedience. (*A. Roberts, M.A.*) *The Head*:—The importance of a military position may be always estimated by the determination with which it is on the one hand assailed, and on the other defended. According to this rule we should conclude that the Church has regarded the Headship of her Lord as the very key of the position. For Christ's crown, and His sole right to rule His own house without Cæsar's interference, her costliest and most powerful sacrifices have been made. Peter and John were the first to publicly maintain this doctrine (Acts iv. 19, v. 29). I. **CHRIST'S BODY IS THE CHURCH**. While all other bodies shall die, this is deathless. "Because I live," &c. This body, paradox as it sounds, is ever changing and yet unchangeable; one undying whole formed of dying parts. Yet not more strange than things in nature. You are not the same person you were a year ago. Look at a river. The exile returns to the haunt of his early years, and there the river flows as it did when he was young; yet the liquidations have undergone perpetual change. And so the stream of time bears on to eternity, and the stream of grace on to glory, successive generations, while the Church herself, like a river fed by perennial fountains, remains unchangeable in Christ's immutability, in His immortality immortal. II. **CHRIST'S BODY, WHICH IS NOT IDENTICAL WITH ANY ONE CHURCH, IS FORMED OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS, TO WHATEVER DENOMINATION THEY MAY BELONG**. Mothers are prone to think their own daughters loveliest, and nothing is more natural than to say of our own denomination, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." But to foster a spirit of sectarianism is an offence as great as to sin against His truth. In some respects bigotry is worse than heresy; and most hateful of all in God's sight is the haughty Churchism which says, "Stand by, I am holier than thou." III. **CHRIST'S BODY, IN A SENSE, EMBRACES ALL THOSE CHURCHES WHICH HOLD THE ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL**. There is a broad line between the essentials and the circumstantialities of the faith. Yet what unnatural attempts at uniformity have men made, as if uniformity were a law of God! On no such model has God constructed our world. God, while He preserves unity, delights in variety. Why then insist on all men observing a uniform style of worship, or thinking alike on matters non-essential to salvation? You might as well insist on all men wearing the same expression, or speaking in the same tone. How tolerant was Paul of differences! His Church has not followed her Lord's example. Christ drove thieves from the temple, but His followers have cast out their brethren. Divisions are bad things. I have no sympathy with those who, confounding charity with indifference, regard matters of religion as not worth disputing about. Such a state of death is worse than war. Yet divisions are bad things. Therefore we ought to aim to heal them, and where we cannot do that to soften their asperities. "Blessed are the peacemakers." Let us recognize a common brotherhood, and love one another as Christ has loved us. Branches of a tree which is still one in root, stem, sap, flower, and fruit; members of the same family, travellers to the same home,

see that ye fall not out by the way. IV. AS HEAD OF THE CHURCH CHRIST IS THE LIFE OF THE MEMBERS. 1. By means of the connection which grace establishes between Him and the believer, He maintains our spiritual life. "Without Me ye can do nothing." All our wishes, words, and works, however expressed in looks, sounds, and movements, are born in the brain, and there is not a good wish, word, or work but Christ was its fountain-head. 2. He is the source of our spiritual life. We must not confound the means of life with its first cause. The life which Christ gave you was His own. If any heavenly fire burns in you Christ kindled it. The spirit life is not hereditary, "not of blood or of the will of the flesh." By His life He now maintains us. V. AS HEAD OF THE CHURCH CHRIST RULES ITS MEMBERS.

It is not pain that makes the insect go spinning round and round to the entertainment of the thoughtless boy who has beheaded it. It has lost in the head that which preserves harmony among the members, and prevents such anarchy as there was in the body politic when there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right to his own eyes. Seated as becomes a king, in the highest place, the head gives law to all beneath it. Its subjects never mutiny. Patterns of the obedience we should yield to Christ, the members hesitate not to obey the head even to their own loss and suffering. How happy we should be were our hearts, minds, bodies, as obedient to Christ as the hand and tongue to the head that rules them! What else but this is needed to preserve the purity and peace of our souls, and restore the same to distracted churches? There is no essential difference between the evangelical denominations, and what should hinder them from being as ready to love and help one the other as my foot is ready to run in the service of my hand? VI. AS HEAD OF THE CHURCH CHRIST SYMPATHIZES WITH HIS MEMBERS.

"All the rivers run into the sea;" all the nerves run into the brain, and through them mind corresponds with matter looking through the eyes, &c. Let the foot but touch a thorn, and it is instantly withdrawn. How? Pain thrilling along the nerves flashes the danger upward to the head, which, by another set of nerves, flashes back an immediate order, so that before the thorn is buried in the flesh the foot is withdrawn. Such is the sympathy between Christ and His people. He is in closest communication with them, and by means of lines which pass from earth to heaven the meanest cottage is joined to the throne of God. No accident breaks that telegraph. The lines of Providence radiate out, and the lines of prayer radiate in. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *One with Christ*.—The moment I make of myself and Christ two, I am all wrong. But when I see that we are one, all is rest and peace. (*Luther.*) *The Holy Catholic Church*.—I. ITS NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS.

"A congregation of faithful men," &c. (*Acts xix.*). 1. The members of which it is composed. (1) Their privileges. They are believers—faithful men, chosen, redeemed, regenerated, sanctified. (2) You must view them as brought together in the bonds of a common profession; for they are faithful men assembled. Solitary individuals, however eminent for piety, cannot form a church (*Matt. xviii. 15*). (3) They must be brought together for religious purposes. A company of believers brought together for secular ends would not be a church. They must assemble to worship God, hear His Word, communicate, &c. (4) These thus congregated are distinguished by the general consistency of their outward behaviour. Hypocrites and evil persons may be found in the Church, but they are not of it. 2. Its characteristics. (1) Unity. The Church is one in (a) The foundation on which it rests. "Other foundation can no man lay." (b) Its worship. "Through Him we all have access." (c) Its sympathy and spirit, which is much to be preferred to uniformity of opinion. (2) Sanctity. This does not refer to external and ritual holiness, but to real and internal. "Be ye holy." (3) Catholicity, diffusiveness, generality. We may each of us have our denominational preferences, but we must not unchurch one another. The Church is catholic in the following particulars:

(a) It is the true Church wherever it may be, as to country or clime. (b) It is found equally among all denominations who are in connection with the Head. II. THE RELATION IN WHICH CHRIST STANDS TO IT. 1. He is the teaching Head. From Him as the great Prophet of the Church flows all the light by which it is illumined and cheered. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom," &c. 2. He is the Head of influence. 3. The Head of government—both legislative and executive. 4. The only Head. (1) Appointed as such. (2) Necessarily so. There can be but one head of the body. 3. All-sufficient. III. THE DUTIES WE OWE TO THIS HALLOWED CONFEDERACY. 1. To try the spirits, whether they be of God—the pretensions of those who offer themselves to our notice as assumed members of the Church. 2. To admire the goodness of Christ in undertaking this government. 3. To in-

quire whether we belong to the Holy Catholic Church. 4. To exult in its prospective triumphs. 5. To look forward to the glorious consummation when this one Church shall be presented in its full numbers before the throne. (*G. Clayton, M.A.*)

Church authority:—It is indispensable to every society to have a central person or idea round which it may revolve; a supreme government to which it must refer and submit. The will of the person, the essence of the idea, is the reason and law of its existence. Such in the Church is Christ. Accordingly He combines in Himself all the elements of which the Church is to consist. The idea of Christian life is that the qualities of spiritual and visible worlds should be brought together. It recognizes, therefore, as its appropriate Head the God-man who combines the Divine nature to be communicated, and the human capacity for its communication, and who embodied in His incarnate life the model of what human nature should be. Around the Mediator, then, all believing men are gathered. He is the central figure around whom the Church is grouped, the essential bond and reason of its existence. As Head of the Church Christ is—I. **THE SOURCE OF THE PECULIAR TRUTHS WHEREBY IT IS FOUNDED.** That which constitutes a society is not the truth it has in common with others, but that which is peculiar to itself. A literary society may have a morality common to themselves and hundreds about them; but it is their peculiar element of literature which constitutes them a literary society. So the Church may have a great deal of the morality common to them and unregenerate men, and so with theological ideas. Hence the name Christian cannot be accorded to those who deny the Deity and atonement of Christ, and the personality and regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost, because these are the characteristic revelations of the New Testament. Of these truths Christ is the source, and all His work concerns itself with them. As the great Prophet of the Church He announces them, as its Priest He realizes them, as its King He reigns to enforce them. II. **THE SOURCE OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE WHEREIN IT CONSISTS.** The idea of a society is the reception by its members, and their practical embodiment of its peculiar truths. The Church is, therefore, more than an association of theoretic believers in the atonement and regeneration; it lives under their power and for their promulgation. Common theories only bring men into juxtaposition; common experiences knit them together. The truth which Christ has given the Church becomes a quickening thing. 1. This supposes that previously men were dead. Moral death is the most lamentable of all deaths. 2. In this condition Christ finds him. "You hath *He* quickened." Restoration to moral life is effected—(1) By His atonement, by which He rescues men from legal death, and procures a reversal of the sentence of condemnation. (2) By His Spirit the soul is quickened, and men having the Spirit of Christ are born again. (3) This moral life is a right state of the heart towards God, and is sustained by these truths. They constrain to holy obedience. III. **THE SOURCE OF ALL THE AUTHORITY OR LAW WHEREWITH IT IS REGULATED.** He determines the precise, direction and shape which spiritual feeling should assume, but such direction need not interfere with the spontaneousness of the feeling. And so the Christian precept prompts the desire for duty and directs it, but is nowhere arbitrary. Thus is it also in the associated life of the Church. Whatever law Christ has given He has given in accordance with the spontaneous prompting of Church life; the prompting might be vague, the precept enlightens it. At the same time, when institutions are needed Christ alone has authority to enjoin them as laws. This we see *e.g.*, in the sacraments. Christ is the sole legislator, and for any individual to interpose an authority between Christ and the Church is open rebellion. IV. **CHRIST ADMINISTERS THE PROVIDENCES WHICH CONSTITUTE ITS EXPERIENCE.** This is part of His mediatorial right in pursuance of His purpose of world restoration. 1. Within the Church He orders the succession and distinctions of its ministry, the accession or removal of its members, their spiritual birth or translation, their trials and privileges. 2. Without the Church He determines or permits the experiences that shall visit it; the waves that shall beat upon the ark; the assaults upon the fortress. Lessons—1. If Christ be the source of all spiritual truth and life, our constant temper should be practical gratitude for our participation of it. 2. If Christ be the source of all authority, our constant habit should be holy obedience. 3. If Christ provides, then we may safely leave all things in His hands. 4. Let us assure ourselves of its final and glorious triumph. (*H. Allon, D.D.*)

Who is the beginning.—Names and titles among men are generally insignificant, and not characteristic of the persons who wear them; but Christ's are both descriptive and commendatory. He is the beginning. I. As to His DIVINE NATURE. It implies His eternity and self-existence. He is not God by derivation and

commission. He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. He is therefore the beginning and fountain of created existence. He who received life from none communicates life to all. Not only our being but our intellectual and moral excellencies are from Him. By His power we are what we are as men; by His grace we are what we are as Christians. II. As MEDIATOR. 1. He is the origin of the Church of God. It is He that has raised it out of the ruins of the fall. Is it a temple? He builds it. Is it a garden? He plants it. 2. He is the beginning to individual saints. Our life is from His death, and all the streams of blessedness flow from His fulness. More particularly (1) He is the source of reconciliation and the beginning of our peace with God. Our prayers and tears have no influence; neither our own work nor that of the Holy Spirit. There is no admission to Divine favour without satisfaction to Divine justice; and Christ alone has made that by the Cross. (2) He is the beginning in reference to the change wrought in us by regeneration. This change is wrought by the Holy Spirit, but as the Spirit of Christ "He shall receive of Mine." Christ within us is the hope of glory. He is our Life. 3. With respect to the resurrection. His own was the pattern and pledge of that of His saints. The same Spirit who quickened Him shall also quicken us. Learn—1. The honour that is due to Christ. 2. As Christ is the beginning of all spiritual blessings, so those blessings can belong to none but those who are in Him. 3. He who is the beginning is also the end; and this secures the happiness of all the saints. He who has begun will also finish (Heb. xii. 2). *Christ the beginning*.—The same place and dignity that Christ has in the order of nature He has in the order of grace; He is the beginning of the new as He was also of the old creation. I. IN THE WAY OF ORDER AS FIRST AND CHIEF OF THE RENEWED STATE. 1. As Founder and Builder of the Church (Matt. xvi. 18; Heb. iii. 3-5). One of the noblest of God's works is His Church of the firstborn; none could constitute it but the God-man. For the materials are sinful and guilty men. Neither men nor angels could raise them into a holy temple to God. 2. As the Lord of the Church (Heb. ii. 7). II. IN THE WAY OF CAUSALITY. 1. As a moral, meritorious cause (1 John iv. 9, 10). 2. As an efficient cause by His Spirit who works in the members of His mystical body (2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. ii. 10). The influence we have from our Head is—(1) Life (Gal. ii. 20; John vi. 57). (2) Likeness (Gal. iv. 19; 2 Cor. iii. 18). It is for the honour of Christ that His image should be upon His members, to distinguish them from others. As to life, He is the root (John xv. 1, 2); as to likeness, He is the pattern (Rom. viii. 29). III. THE REASON OF THIS. 1. It is for the honour of the Son to be the Head of the new world. In the kingdom of Christ all things are new; a new covenant, paradise, ministry, ordinances, members, and so a new Head or Second Adam (1 Cor. xv. 45). It is suited to our lost estate. (T. Manton, D.D.) *The beginning*.—I. THIS TERM EXPRESSES CHRIST'S DIVINE NATURE. He must be Divine who is "almighty," and "who is, and was, and is to come"; and since "the beginning" is a title applied in the same passage (Rev. i. 8), Paul pronounces Him Divine. II. IT EXPRESSES CHRIST'S RELATION TO HIS CHURCH. 1. The beginning of a tree is the seed it springs from. The giant oak had its origin in the acorn. Now as a seed Christ was apparently of little promise, "a root out of a dry ground," yet out of Him has grown that Church which shall bear the blessings of salvation to the ends of the earth. 2. A house, again, begins at the foundation. The first stone laid is the foundation-stone. Christ is this, a tried stone, a firm and immovable basis for the believer. 4. The Author of our faith, the Founder of the Church, began it, ere sun or stars shone in heaven. He provided for the fall before it happened. He had the lifeboat on the beach before the bark was stranded, or launched, or even built. He was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." III. HE IS THE BEGINNING OF SALVATION TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER. 1. Whatever was the instrument employed it was His grace that began what had a beginning. The preacher was a man but drawing a bow at a venture. It was Christ's eye that aimed the shaft, and His strength that bent the bow. When our sins were carrying us out to burial He stopped the bier and imparted life. 2. As Christ is the beginner, so is He the finisher of our faith. He does no half work, half saving, or half sanctifying a man. Trust Him that when He has begun a good work He will carry it on to the end. (T. Guthrie, D.D.) *The firstborn from the dead*.—I. OPEN THE TERMS. "Firstborn." If the grave was as a womb to Christ, and His resurrection as a birth, then Christ was in a manner born when He rose. Only He hath the pre-eminence; surely others will follow Him (Acts xxvi. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 20). As in the consecration of the firstfruits the whole harvest was consecrated, so Christ by rising

raises all. II. **VINDICATE THE NOTION.** Two objections lie against it. 1. Many were raised before Him or by Him (1 Kings xvii.; 2 Kings iv., xiii. 21; Luke vii. 15, viii. 55; John xi. 44; Matt. xxvii. 52). (1) We must distinguish between a proper and improper resurrection. He arose by a proper, which is to rise to a life immortal; they only to a mortal estate, and so the great disease was rather removed than cured (Acts xiii. 34). (2) Others were raised by the power and virtue of His resurrection, but He by His own power (John viii. 18). Thus Christ is said not only to be raised again, but to rise (Rom. iv. 25). (3) All those who rose before, rose only by special dispensation to lay down their bodies again when God should see fit, and rose only as private persons. But Christ rose as a public Person, and once for all. 2. Concerning the raising of the wicked. Christ cannot be the firstborn to them who belong not to His mystical body. The firstborn implies a relation to the rest of the family. The offering of the firstfruits did not sanctify the tares and weeds. (1) Certainly the wicked shall rise again (Acts xxiv. 15; John v. 28, 29); but (2) they will be raised by Christ as a Judge, not as a Redeemer. The one sort are raised by the power of His vindictive justice, the other by the Holy Ghost by virtue of His covenant (Rom. viii. 11); the one by Christ's power from without as Judge of dead and living, the other by an inward quickening influence flowing from Him as their proper Head. (3) The wicked are forced to appear to receive their sentence, the other go joyfully to meet the Bridegroom and enter into eternal life. III. **HOW IS THIS AN EVIDENCE AND ASSURANCE TO ALL CHRISTIANS OF THEIR HAPPY AND GLORIOUS RESURRECTION?** 1. There shall be a resurrection. It is necessary to prove that—(1) Because it is the foundation of all godliness (2 Cor. xv. 32). (2) Because it is not easy of belief. The great and public evidence thereof is Christ's which makes ours—(a) Possible. That is the least we can gather from it (1 Cor. xv. 13). (b) Easy. By rising Christ has conquered death (1 Cor. xv. 57; Heb. ii. 14). (c) Certain and necessary from—First, our relation to Christ as Head. He cannot live gloriously in heaven and leave His members under the power of death (Eph. i. 23, iv. 13), otherwise He would be a maimed Christ. Second, the charge and office of Christ (John vi. 39). Third, the mercy of God through the merits of Christ to the faithful who have hazarded their lives for His sake (1 Thess. iv. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 14). 2. The resurrection to the faithful will be happy and glorious. (1) Because Christ's is not only a cause, but pattern. The members were appointed to be conformed to their Head (Rom. viii. 19; 1 Pet. i. 21). (2) By the grant of God. They have a right and title to it. Being admitted to His family they may expect to be admitted into His presence; and they have the Holy Spirit as an earnest till it be accomplished (Eph. i. 14, iv. 30; Rom. viii. 28). IV. **THE USE IS TO PERSUADE YOU TO THE BELIEF OF THESE TWO GRAND ARTICLES OF FAITH.** 1. The resurrection of Christ. That is the great foundation of faith (1 Cor. xv. 14). All the apostles' preaching was built on this supposition. (1) Partly because this is the great evidence of the truth of Christianity (Acts xxiii. 31, xiii. 33). (2) Partly to show that He is in a capacity to convey spiritual and eternal life to others; which, if He had continued in the state of death, He could not be (John xiv. 19; 1 Pet. i. 3; Eph. i. 20-21). 2. Your own resurrection. (1) Consider it as a work of omnipotency. To an infinite power there can be no difficulty (Phil. iii. 21; Zech. viii. 6). (2) We have relief from the justice of God. He is the rewarder of good and bad, but He does not dispense His rewards in this life (1 Cor. xv. 29). (3) God's unchangeable love, which inclines Him to seek the dust of His confederates; therefore Christ proves the resurrection from God's covenant title (Matt. xxii. 31). (T. Manton, D.D.) *The firstborn*:—Christ is the firstborn from the dead. I. **IN THE DIGNITY OF HIS PERSON.** He is the greatest who ever entered or shall ever leave the gates of death. Isaiah in one of his boldest flights of fancy sets forth the destruction of the Babylonian monarchy. He sees a mighty king descending into the grave, breaking its awful silence and entering alone the dark domain of a monarch mightier than himself. On his ear fall the voices of kings long buried, muttering, "Art thou become as we?" When we die we sink into the grave as snowflakes on the water, but Christ being the Lord of glory, the fountain of life, His descent into the tomb was an event which may well be set forth by the prophet's imagery. I can fancy all the dead astonished at His coming. Fancy some great, good monarch thrust into the common jail; and were such a reverse of fortune borne out of love to His subjects, how would it move their love and admiration as well as their wonder and pity! Yet what were such an event compared with what, unnoticed by the world, took place in the garden? Christ's descent into the tomb awoke death from its deepest apathy. That awoke those who are heedless of the shock of earthquakes.

The graves were opened. Waiting for Him to lead the way, many dead saints left the tomb. **II. BECAUSE HE ROSE BY HIS OWN POWER.** There is no sensibility, passion, or power in the dead. They can do nothing to help themselves. In all cases but Christ's, life was given, not taken back. **III. BECAUSE HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO NEVER ROSE TO DIE AGAIN.** The others twice drank the bitter cup. **IV. BECAUSE HE HAS TAKEN PRECEDENCE OF HIS PEOPLE.** It is better for me, if I am a poor man standing in need of royal favours, to have a friend at court than in my own humble cottage; and it is better for us that Christ is with the Father in heaven than with us on earth. But apart from that, precedence was His right. The King precedes His train; the Head was first out of the grave, afterwards the body and its members. It is as the prelude to our own resurrection that Christ's is to us the object of the greatest satisfaction and joy. Henceforth the grave holds but a lease of the saints. Because He rose we shall rise. If we are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ what reconciling views of death does this open to us! (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The Divine harbinger*.—Sweeter to our ear than the full chorus of bright skies and green wood are the first notes of the warbler that pipes away the winter, and breaks in on its long, drear silence! And more welcome to our eye than the flush of summer's gayest flowers is the simple snowdrop that hangs its pure white bell above the dead, bare ground. And why? These are the firstborn of the year, the forerunners of a crowd to follow. In that group of silver bells that ring in the spring with its joys and loves and singing birds, my fancy's eye sees the naked earth clothed with beauty, the streams, like children let loose, dancing and laughing, and rejoicing in their freedom, bleak winter gone, and nature's annual resurrection. And in that solitary simple note my fancy hears the carol of larks, wide moor, hillside, and woodlands full of song and ringing with all music. And in Christ, the Firstborn, I see the grave giving up its dead: from the depths of the sea, from lonely wilderness and crowded churchyard they come, like the dew of the grass, an innumerable multitude. Risen Lord! we rejoice in Thy resurrection. We hail it as the harbinger and blessed pledge of our own. The first to come forth, Thou art the Elder Brother of a family whose countless numbers the patriarch saw in the dust of the desert, whose holy beauty he saw shining in the bright stars of heaven. (*Ibid.*) That in all things He might have the pre-eminence.—*The Pre-eminent One* :—It is the ordination of providence that in every society or profession there should be a head—some one who should have the pre-eminence. The father ought to be the chief of his house. Israel was governed by God, yet He chose Moses as His vice-gerent, and when the nation was afterwards divided into tens, hundreds, &c., still Moses retained the pre-eminence. No society could hang together without this. The same ordination holds good in the Church. From its members some are made eminent pastors, &c., yet there is but one to whom the pre-eminence belongs. And we are told the reason of it. Among men we see eminence variously displayed: one is eminent for wisdom, another for power, and so on; but Christ is pre-eminent in *all* things. Therefore Christ is reserved for this honour; and that not simply as God, but as Mediator. Christ has pre-eminence. **I. IN THE ESTIMATION OF DEITY.** 1. On whom does the Father concentrate His love and delight? Jehovah calls Him His own Son, His dear Son, His beloved Son. Christ is the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, and He speaks of the glory He had before the world was. Thrice did the Father glorify Him—at His baptism, transfiguration, and just before His passion. At His incarnation the Father said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him," and after His burial sent angels to roll away the stone. 2. The same pre-eminence is given by the Holy Spirit. He anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows—descended on Him at His baptism, glorifies Him, and receives of His. **II. IN THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES.** "They wrote of Me." "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Every metaphor that the glowing glories of earth or heaven have offered is selected to put honour on His brow. 1. Consider His titles—Foundation, Door, Captain, Advocate, Judge, &c. 2. His offices—Prophet, Priest, King, Shepherd, &c. **III. AS EXHIBITED IN THE GLORY OF HIS WORKS.** 1. Creation. Angels have done wonders, and men; but whoever saw anything equal to the works of Christ? 2. Providence. "The government is on His shoulders." 3. Redemption. **IV. IN THE OPINION OF BELIEVERS.** There are many who are very dear to us on earth and in heaven; but who has the pre-eminence? "Unto you that believe He is precious." "He is the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." **V. IN THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN.** To be with Christ, apart from the consideration of its other glories, that

is heaven. Conclusion. Give Christ the pre-eminence. 1. In your hearts. 2. In your houses. 3. Labour that He may have it in the whole world. (*J. Sherman.*)

*Christ pre-eminent:—*I. HE IS THE FIRST. 1. He is pre-eminent in age (ver. 15). "Before Abraham was I am." 2. In the work of redemption, "firstborn from the dead." II. HE IS THE MIGHTIEST. 1. As Creator (ver. 16). 2. As Preserver (ver. 17). 3. As Destroyer. We cannot destroy the tiniest piece of matter. He can desolate a world. III. HE IS THE RICHEST. He owns—1. All the treasures of creation (ver. 10). 2. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (chap. ii. 3). 3. All the treasures of grace (ver. 19). IV. HE IS THE HIGHEST. 1. He now occupies the throne of mercy. 2. He will leave this for the throne of judgment. 3. He will finally sit on the throne of glory and reign for ever and ever. V. HE IS THE LOVELIEST. "The altogether lovely." 1. As the brightness of His Father's glory. 2. As the fairest of the children of men. VI. HE IS THE LAST as He is the First. He only *hath* immortality; ours is derived from Him. (*H. G. Guinness.*)

*Christ pre-eminent in all things:—*Some are eminent for one thing, some for another. Some are distinguished for vast wealth, some are ennobled by intellectual resources, some obtain a name for personal bravery, but none has pre-eminence in all things. But in whatever light we look at Christ He is pre-eminent. I. IN HIS DIVINE AND MYSTERIOUS NATURE. "God manifest in the flesh," "mighty God," &c. II. IN THE UNRIVALLED GLORY OF HIS PERFECTIONS. He has every attribute of Deity, and "Whatever things the Father doeth, these doeth the Son likewise." III. IN THE STUPENDOUS CHARACTER OF HIS WORKS. 1. All creation is His handiwork. 2. In the work of Providence governing and sustaining the universe. IV. IN THE ILLUSTRIOUS DIGNITY OF HIS OFFICES. Shepherd and Bishop of souls; His throne is for ever and ever; He is the Mediator of a better covenant; in Him, as Prophet, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. V. IN THE CONSISTENT TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE. Take any doctrine you choose, it must have some connection with Christ. Promises send us to Christ to fulfil them; precepts send us to Christ, by whose strength alone we can perform them; threatenings send us to Christ, by whose atonement and intercession alone they can be averted. Take Christ from the Bible and you its life; its promises have no reality, its prophecies are empty words, its laws lose their power, and its hopes their animation and realization. VI. IN THE STUPENDOUS WORK OF HUMAN REDEMPTION. For this He alone was competent. Salvation begins and ends with Him. VII. IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. The Christian's faith is faith in Christ; his joy, joy in Christ; his strength, strength in Christ; his life, life in Christ. Think of what is necessary to a perfect Christian and you will find it all in Christ. All worship is to be offered in His name, and all obedience rendered Him. VIII. IN CHRISTIAN PREACHING AND TESTIMONY. To bear witness to Christ and to secure Him homage is the end of our creation. IX. Christ will yet have pre-eminence in the world. (*W. P. Applebe, LL.D.*)

*Christ in all things the pre-eminent:—*Nature and the Bible are alike in this respect—that you find in each two kinds of objects: the one simple, quiet, beautiful; the other grand, majestic, overpowering. In this chapter we get amongst the Highlands of Revelation. I. THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST. 1. As extending over two spheres, the realms of nature and grace, the universe and the Church. (1) He is the "firstborn of every creature." We cannot suppose Him to be a creature, because "He is before all things," &c. In Rabbinical literature Jehovah is styled the firstborn of creation, by which is meant that He is supreme over the universe; for the birthright carried with it supremacy. In like manner the phrase must be taken in reference to Christ. His dominion extends to all things in heaven: sun, moon, stars, &c., and angels who never fell; to things on earth: the globe and its inhabitants, all mineral, vegetable, animal, and human existence. (2) He is Head of the Church. Lord of the Church's mind—in their religious thinking believers are to think under Him. Lord of the Church's heart—in their affections believers are to be guided by Him. Lord of the Church's life—for His Word is law. 2. This supremacy has been obtained in two different ways. (1) Christ's birthright of authority and power over the universe is by creation. (2) In His redemptive work He is the firstborn of the dead. He is the firstborn in both, but creation is by life; redemption is through death. 3. There is a distinction between the relations in which the created universe and the redeemed Church stands to Him. He made the one; He is the Head of the other. The universe is a grand collection of things made by His power and for His use. Thus we are led to separate between the universe and Christ. He is no part of it. But in relation to the Church the distinction is dropped, and an idea of most intimate union introduced—it is His body, which is

nowhere attributed of nature. 4. This pre-eminence issues in the union of the two realms. Ver. 20 should be read in connection with this. The reconciliation goes further than persons and laws and governments. Thus much appears. (1) That Christ, in His mediatorial reign, through His death, becomes the Lord and Guardian of the entire universe of holy beings, redeemed and unfallen; that He gathers all in one unto God, and is equally King of earth and heaven. (2) That the sin of man has disturbed the relation between Him and angels; that man getting out of place, throws into disorder the whole sphere of existence to which he belongs, as a wandering star would the solar system, and that Christ, by putting men right, reconciles them to angels and angels to them. (3) That without an atonement it was an unbecoming thing that heaven should receive depraved mortals; but that with an atonement it is quite befitting that men redeemed and sanctified should enter the ranks of the glorified; and that in the end such will be the number of the saved, and the relation in which they stand to the rest of the universe, that in some sense a reconciliation of all things will be accomplished. 5. Let me ask whether in correspondence with these views of Christ's supremacy He has pre-eminence in our hearts and lives? II. THE PLENITUDE (ver. 19). 1. The fulness of the Father exists in Christ as it nowhere else does. In nature there are streams of the Divine glory, yet the ocean fulness is not there. In the reason of man there are Divine sparks; in the history of the world Divine footprints; in the souls of believers and the united virtues of the Church there is much Divine light and goodness; but the fulness nowhere, not even in the Bible, only in Christ. And wherever else in any measure it is, it is from Him. He is the Creator and Upholder of the world; Light and Lord of human reason; Sovereign of the ages; Giver of gracious power; Inspirer and Subject of the Book of books. 2. This plenitude must be taken in connection with the supremacy of Christ. (1) In creation He has the pre-eminence, because in Him all fulness dwells of infinite power, wisdom, goodness. (2) How could He be Head over all things to His Church if He were a man? A created Saviour could not supply all our need; but in the Divine Christ there is all fulness of pardoning mercy, renewing power, supporting love, strength for a day of trouble, a dying hour. 3. The pre-eminence and fulness of Christ constitute the leading object of our blessed faith. Agencies are needed to bring men to Him, but nothing can add to the completeness of those who are in Him. (*J. Stoughton, D.D.*) *Christ is pre-eminent*:—I. AS TO HIS PERSONALITY. He stands unique. All the elements in His make up to which the term human can be applied show Him to be pre-eminently human. He came into the world by the gateway of the Hebrew nation, but He is not a Jew. He belonged to 1800 ago, and yet He is of no age. He spent His days and nights under the Eastern skies, but He is of no clime. He gathers up into Himself all the best elements in Jewish, Greek, and Roman life. He was pre-eminently moral and devotional; He was in sympathy with everything beautiful; He glorified the moral law, was loyal to the national, and had worldwide ambitions, only, unlike those of Rome, they were benevolent. II. AS TO HIS IDEAS OF GOD AND MAN. The test of pre-eminence of nature is largeness of idea on these themes. 1. The idea Christ gave us of God was pre-eminent. No one ever approached it. There had been many attempts to put the nature of God into a word, but all had failed till He said "Father." 2. So with His idea of the nature of man. The noblest man among the Jews was the chief of the Pharisees or Sadducees; among the Greeks the most physically beautiful; among the Romans the strong man able to trample every one who was in His path into the dust. Under the influence of Jesus the noblest man is the gentlest, humanest, chastest, and most charitable. This is a new idea. 3. Other ideas help us to see how pre-eminently Jesus was the world's greatest thinker, such as the brotherhood of man; the idea that love of God is best expressed in the service of man, the idea that the worst man may be saved. III. AS TO HIS MISSION IN THE WORLD. No other man ever carried on such a mission or was capable of entertaining the idea of it. It was to bring a revolted world back into such an allegiance as is worthy of God to accept and man to give; not forced, but based on love. The accomplishment of such a mission seems to us impossible, but in individuals it has been accomplished, and will yet be in the whole world. IV. AS TO UNBIASED HUMAN OPINION OF HIM. Only one conspicuous man in the world of literature has been blind to His excellency—Voltaire; but Rousseau, another great sceptic, wrote, "If the life and death of Socrates be those of a saint, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God." Napoleon I., the old Roman, back again in the Christian centuries, said, "I know men, Jesus was not a man." (*R. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 19-22. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.—*The reconciling Son*.—I. As before we have CHRIST IN RELATION TO GOD. 1. In the use of the term "fulness," which was a very important term in Gnostic speculations, there is a reference to some of the heretical teachers' expressions. What fulness? (chap. ii. 9). The abundance or totality of the Divine attributes. We have no need to look to nature for fragmentary revelations of God's character—that He has fully and finally declared in His Son. 2. "Dwell" implies permanent abode, chosen, perhaps, to oppose the view that the union of the Divine and human in Christ was but temporary. 3. This is the result of the Father's good pleasure. The Father determined the work of the Son, and delighted in it. II. Again, as before, we have CHRIST AND THE UNIVERSE, of which He is not only the Maker, Sustainer, and Lord, but through the blood of the Cross reconciles all things to Himself. Probably the false teachers had dreams of reconciling agents. Paul lifts up in opposition the one Sovereign Mediator whose Cross is the bond of peace for the universe. 1. Observe the distinct reference of these words to the former clauses. "Through Him" was creation; "through Him" is reconciliation. "All things" were made, sustained by, and subordinated to Him; the same "all things" are reconciled. A significant change in the order is noticeable. "In the heavens and upon the earth" the order of creation; but in reconciliation the order is reversed. 2. The correspondence shows that the reconciliation affects not only rational and responsible creatures, but "things." The width of reconciliation is the same as that of the creation. Then these words refer mainly to the restitution of the material universe to its primal obedience, and represent Christ the Creator removing by His Cross the shadow that has passed over nature by reason of sin. 1. Man's sin has made the physical world "subject to vanity." Man by sin has compelled dead matter to be his instrument in acts of rebellion against God. He has polluted the world by sin, and laid unnumbered woes on the living creatures. This evil shall be done away by the reconciling power of the blood of the Cross. The universe is one because the Cross pierces its heights and depths. 2. The reference to things in heaven may also be occasioned by the dreams of the heretical teachers. As to reconciliation proper among spiritual beings in that realm, there can be no question of it. There is no enmity among angels. Still, if the reference be to them, then we know that to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the Cross has been the teacher of unlearned depths in the Divine nature and purposes, the knowledge of which has drawn them nearer to the heart of God and made their union with Him more blessed and close. 3. Sublime and great beyond all our dreams shall be the issue. Certain as the throne of God is it that His purposes shall be accomplished. The great sight of the Seer of Patmos is the best commentary on our text (Rev. v. 9-13). III. CHRIST AND HIS RECONCILING WORK IN THE CHURCH. We have still the parallel kept up. As in verse 18 He was representing as giving life to the Church in a higher fashion than to the universe, so, with a similar heightening of the meaning of reconciliation, He is here set forth as its giver to the Church. 1. Observe the solemn description of men before it. "Alienated," not "aliens," but having become so. The seat of the enmity is in that inner man which thinks and wills, and its sphere of manifestation is "in evil works" which are religiously acts of hostility to God because morally bad. This is thought nowadays a too harsh description. But the charge is not that of conscious, active hostility, but of practical want of affection as manifested by habitual disobedience or inattention to God's wishes and by indifference and separation from Him in heart and mind. 2. Here as uniformly God Himself is the Reconciler, it is we who are reconciled. The Divine patience loves on through all our enmity, and though perfect love meeting human sin must ever become wrath, it never becomes hatred. 3. The means of reconciliation. (1) "The body," &c., an exuberance of language to correct, perhaps, the error of that our Lord's body was only a phantasm, or to guard against the risk of confounding it with "His body the Church," or as showing how full His mind was of the overwhelming wonder of the fact. (2) But the Incarnation is not the whole gospel; "through death" Christ's death has so met the requirements of the Divine law, that Divine love can come freely forth and forgive sinful men. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *The reconciling work of the great Mediator*.—I. THE UNIQUE QUALIFICATION OF THE GREAT MEDIATOR. 1. In Him all fulness dwells. 2. It is the good pleasure of the Father that this fulness should reside in the Son. II. THE RECONCILING WORK OF THE GREAT MEDIATOR. 1. The extent of the reconciliation. (1) Sinful creatures on earth are reconciled to God in Christ. (2) Sinful and sinless creatures are reconciled. (3) Sinless and unfallen

creatures are brought nearer to God in Christ. III. THE MEANS BY WHICH THE RECONCILIATION IS EFFECTED. Lessons :—1. The great Mediator has every qualification for His stupendous work. 2. The reconciliation of a disorganized universe is beyond the power of any subordinate agent. 3. Rebellious man can be restored to peace with God only as he yields himself up to the great Mediator. (*G. Barlow.*)

Reconciliation :—I. IN THE PERSON THAT REDEEMS US WE FIND FULLNESS. 1. And there had need be so. (1) He found our measure of sin full towards God. When a river swells it will find out all the channels and overflow the whole field ; so sin hath found an issue at the ear, eye, tongue, hands, feet, and so overflows all. (2) God's measure of anger was full too. (3) Then it pleased the Father that there should be another fulness to overflow these. 2. This is "all fulness," and is only in Christ. Elijah had a great portion of the Spirit ; Elisha sees that that will not serve Him, and so asks a double portion ; but still but portions. Stephen is full of faith, a blessed fulness where there is no room for doubt ; Dorcas is full of good works, a fulness above faith ; Mary is full of grace, which is a fulness above both ; but yet not "all fulness." I shall be as full as Paul in heaven, *i.e.*, have as full a vessel, but not so full a cellar. Christ only hath an infinite content and capacity, and so an infinite fulness. 3. But was Christ God before, and is there a supplementary fulness ? Yes. To make Him a competent person to redeem man something was to be added to Christ though He were God ; wherein we see the incomprehensibility of man's sin, that even to God Himself there was required something else than God before we could be redeemed. Perfect God, there is the fulness of the Redeemer's dignity ; perfect man, there is the fulness of His capacity to suffer and pay our debt. This was a strange fulness, for it was a fulness of emptiness, all humiliation and exinanition by His obedience unto death. 4. How came Christ by all this fulness ? "It pleased the Father." II. THE PACIFICATION. It is much that God would admit any peace ; more that for peace He should require blood ; more still that it should be the blood of Him who was injured ; most of all that it should be the blood of the Cross, *i.e.*, death. 1. Then there was a heavy war before ; for the Lord of Hosts was our enemy ; and what can all our musters come to when He is against us ? 2. But what is the peace, and how are we included in it ? A man must not think himself included in it because he feels no effects of this war. Though there be no blow stricken, the war remains in the time of truce. But here is no truce. All this while that thou enjoyest this imaginary security the enemy undermines thee, and will blow thee up at last more irrevocably than if he had battered thee with outward calamities all the time. But in this text there is true peace, and one already made, and made by Him who lacked nothing for the making of it. 3. Is effusion of blood the way of peace ? That may make them from whom it is drawn glad of peace. But here mercy and truth are met together. God would be true to His own justice and be merciful to us. Justice required blood, for without it is no remission. Under the law it was blood of bulls and goats ; here it is His blood. "Greater love," &c. (*John xv. 13*) ; but He who said so laid down His life shamefully and painfully for His enemies. III. THE APPLICATION THEREOF TO ALL TO WHOM THAT RECONCILIATION APPERTAINS. All this was done, and yet the apostle prays us to be reconciled to God. The general peace was made by Christ's death, as a general pardon is given at the King's coming ; we have to accept it. 1. There is a reconciliation of things in heaven. (1) The saints, who reached forth the hand of faith to lay hold of Christ before He came. (2) Angels, who were confirmed in perfect holiness and blessedness. 2. Things on earth. (1) The creature who by virtue of it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. (2) Men. 3. But the most proper and literal meaning is that all things in heaven and earth be reconciled to God ; *i.e.*, His glory, to a fitter disposition to glorify Him, by being reconciled to one another in Christ ; that in Him, as Head of the Church, they in heaven and we on earth be united together as one body in the communion of saints (*Eph. i. 10*). 4. Here there is still reconciliation to be made, not only toward one another on the bond of charity, but on ourselves. In ourselves we find things in heaven and on earth to reconcile. There is heavenly zeal to be reconciled to discretion ; heavenly purity to one another's infirmities ; heavenly liberty to a care for the promotion of scandal. Till the flesh and spirit be reconciled this reconciliation is not accomplished ; but both are, in Christ, when in all the faculties of soul and body we glorify Him. (*J. Donne, D.D.*)

The fulness :—I. A PARTICULAR FULLNESS dwelt in Christ. The definitive article "the" has reference not to fulness in general. It would not be to the honour of Jesus to have all fulness whatsoever. We read of some whose cups and platters were full of extortion and

excess; of Elymas, who was "full of subtlety," &c.; of men who were "full of envy, murder," &c. In Jesus it is some conspicuously glorious fulness. II. A DIVINE FULNESS. The apostle refers to it in chap. ii. 9—the fulness of the Godhead, not only really and spiritually, but bodily, in an incarnated condition, and thus conspicuously, and in such a way as made it a reasonable thing to ascribe to our Lord the work of creation on the one hand, and the headship of the Church on the other. 1. The Godhead is full of power. "Nothing is too hard for the Lord." All that fulness, too, is in Jesus, so that He is able to wheel the worlds in their orbits and "to save to the uttermost," &c. 2. The Godhead is full of righteousness. In God is "no darkness at all." Our Lord is "Jesus Christ the righteous," whom no one can convict of sin; and He is so full that His righteousness is available, not to Himself alone, but "unto all and upon all them that believe." 3. The Godhead is full of love. "God is love." Jesus said, "Greater love than this," &c. 4. Hence, too, there was in Him fulness "of grace and truth," of meekness, tenderness, gentleness. III. A PERMANENT FULNESS. "Dwelt." The Father did not desire that the fulness of Godhead should stream through our Saviour, illuminating and glorifying His nature as it passed, and then vanish. It is the same in glory "to-day, yesterday, and for ever." (*J. Morison, D.D.*) I. THE FULNESS THAT IS IN CHRIST. 1. All fulness. Ahasuerus promised Esther that her request should be granted though it cost him half his kingdom. Christ offers nothing by halves. "It pleased the Father," &c. Transferring Divine wealth to our account in the bank of heaven, and giving us an unlimited credit there, Jesus says: "All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." 2. All fulness of mercy to pardon sin. The gospel proclaims a universal amnesty. When the last gun is fired, and pardon proclaimed in reconquered provinces, is it not always marked by notable exceptions? But from Christ's pardoning mercy none are excepted save those who except themselves. It reaches the vilest sinner. It binds a zone of mercy round the world, and perish the hands that would narrow it by a hair's breadth. None shall be damned but those who damn themselves. One might fancy that now all are certain to be saved. Who will not accept of it? Offer a starving man bread, a poor man money, a sick man health, a lifeboat in the wreck, how gladly will they be accepted! But salvation, the one thing needful, is the one thing man will not accept. He will stoop to pick up a piece of gold out of the mire, but he will not rise out of the mire to receive a crown from heaven. What infatuation! 3. All fulness of grace to sanctify. Why are the best of us no better, holier, happier? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? No. He who justified can sanctify, and with holiness give fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. There is efficiency and sufficiency in Jesus to complete what He has begun. There are stores of grace which are like the widow's barrel that grew no emptier for the meals it furnished. "My grace is sufficient for thee." With a well ever flowing our vessels need never be empty. No earthly fortune will stand daily visits to the bank, but this will. You may ask too little, but you cannot ask too much; you may go too seldom, but you cannot go too often to the throne. II. THERE IS A CONSTANT SUPPLY OF SANCTIFYING AND PARDONING GRACE IN CHRIST. "Dwelt," not come and go, like a wayfaring man, like a shallow, noisy, treacherous brook that fails when most needed, but like the deep-seated spring that, rising silently, though affluently, at the mountain's foot, and having unseen communication with its exhaustless supplies, is ever flowing over its grassy margin, equally unaffected by the long droughts that dry the wells and the frosts that pave the neighbouring lake with ice. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The fulness of Christ*:—I. THE FULNESS OF CHRIST. 1. A fulness of all Divine attributes and perfections. Omnipotence in creation; omniscience, wisdom, and goodness in providence; grace in the dispensation of the Spirit; justice in the grand assize, &c., are all His. Hence fulness of worship is offered Him in heaven (Rev. iii. 2) and earth. 2. A fulness of truth and wisdom for the instruction of man. John tells us that He is full of truth; Christ says, "I am the truth"; and Paul says, "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (1) All the rays of Divine truth which have ever enlightened prophets and apostles, guided wandering sinners back to God, and blessed the Church with purity and consolation, were emanations from Him, the great Prophet of the Church. (2) In the Scriptures we have the mind of Christ. (3) But while the Bible is sufficient, such is the power which prejudice, unbelief, and ignorance exert over the mind, that the influence of Christ is requisite to the reception of the truth. Our prayer, then, before the open Bible should be, "Open mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things," &c. 3. A

fulness of merit to justify every believer in His name. (1) Convinced of sin, our great question is, "How can man be just with God?" It is evident that we cannot be just in our own righteousness, nor in that of the holiest saints, for they were indebted to another for the robe they wear; nor in that of angels, for no creature, however elevated, can render an obedience exceeding the law of his creation, and consequently can have no works of supererogation which can be disposed of for the benefit of others. (2) No cheering answer can reach us but that which comes from Calvary. By His obedience unto death, the law broken by us is honoured, its precepts fulfilled, and its penalty endured. (3) By faith we become interested in Jesus, and thus are justified freely by His grace. 4. A fulness of power to accomplish all the purposes for which the mediatorial office was instituted. He sits upon the throne wielding the omnipotent sceptre of universal dominion, and reigns over all for the benefit of the Church. 5. A fulness of grace and compassion to relieve and comfort His afflicted servants (Heb. iv. 14).

II. IT IS THE PLEASURE OF THE FATHER THAT THIS FULLNESS SHOULD DWELL IN CHRIST. 1. It is in harmony with the Divine counsels. 2. It meets with the Divine approbation. Conclusion: The subject—1. Directs believers to the source of all consolation. 2. Sinners to the source of all salvation. (*Congregational Remembrancer*.)

Fulness of grace in Christ:—I. By FULLNESS OF GRACE we understand all those perfections to which the term grace extends itself. II. WHY WAS IT NECESSARY THAT THIS FULLNESS OF GRACE SHOULD BE IN CHRIST? 1. The fitness of things required it, on account of the union of His soul with the Word. For it is proper that in proportion as anything is nearer to the influential cause, so much the more abundantly should it partake of the influence itself. Since, therefore, God Himself is the fountain of grace, the soul of Christ, so near to God, cannot but abound in grace. 2. Necessity requires it, from consideration of the end, on account of the relation between Christ and the race. For grace was to be bestowed on him, not as on a private person, but as the universal fountain from whom it might be transfused into the rest of men. But in this fountain all the parts ought to be full and combined. The evangelist shows that grace is shed abroad from Christ (John i. 16; Eph. iv. 7).

III. THIS FULLNESS OF GRACE IS PECULIAR TO CHRIST ALONE. To prove which, notice: In the saints militant there is not a fulness of grace; for it cannot consist with so many remains of the old man: for a fulness of grace leaves no room for sin. But not even in the very saints triumphant. For if one star differeth from another star in light and magnitude, then how much more does it differ from the sun? But an objection is raised, that the Virgin Mary, for instance, is said to be "full of grace" (Luke i. 28); and Stephen also "full of grace and power" (Acts vi. 8); and that therefore a fulness of grace is not peculiar to Christ. I answer, The fulness of grace is twofold: one may be regarded on the part of grace itself, when a man hath it in the greatest extent, both as to every kind of grace, and in the greatest perfection as to degree. This is the fulness of Christ alone. The other regards grace on the part of the possessor when a man hath it as fully and as sufficiently as his state and condition can contain. Hence observe—1. That God is not accustomed to impose an office upon any one without at the same time conferring upon him all those powers which are necessary for the discharge of it: He lays upon Christ the office of Head of the Church; but He also imparts to Him a fulness of grace. Therefore, whoever thrust themselves into offices, for the administration of which they are altogether incompetent, are not called to them by God, but are impelled either by avarice or ambition. 2. Since there is a fulness of grace in Christ alone, we must expect its streams to flow to us from Him alone: they who seek grace elsewhere commit two evils (Jer. ii. 13). (*Bishop Davenant*.)

The fulness of Christ the treasury of the saints:—I. THERE IS A GLORIOUS FULLNESS IN JESUS. 1. Enough to enable a saint to rise to the highest degree of grace. If there be anything lacking for the attainment of the Divine image, it is not a deficiency Christward; it is occasioned by shortcomings in ourselves. If sin is to be overcome, the conquering power dwells in Him in its fulness; if virtue is to be attained, sanctifying energy resides in Him to perfection. 2. Enough for the conquest of the world. The Lord God omnipotent shall reign from shore to shore. We have in Christ all the might that is needed for subduing the nations; let us go into His armoury, and we shall receive invincible weapons and almighty strength. 3. Every fulness for teaching, convincing, converting, sanctifying, and keeping unto the end. II. THE FULLNESS IS IN JESUS NOW. 1. The glory of the past exercises a depressing influence over many Christians. Scarcely any Church

realizes that it can do what its first promoters did. A people are in an evil case when their heroism is historical. In Jesus all fulness dwells for Paul, Luther, Whitfield, you and me. Christianity has not lost its pristine strength; we have lost our faith. Why should we not have a greater Pentecost than Peter saw? The times have altered, but Jesus is the Eternal. 2. A great many have their eye on the future only. But it doesn't say that the fulness shall dwell. Whatever shall yet be done by His grace may be done to-day. Our laziness puts off the work of conquest; and want of faith makes us dote upon the millennium instead of hearing the Spirit's voice to-day. 3. Our churches believe that there is great fulness in Christ, and that sometimes they ought to enjoy it. The progress of Christianity is to be by tides which ebb and flow. There are to be revivals like spring, which must alternate with lethargies like winter. But it is not the Lord's pleasure that a fulness should reside in Jesus during revivals, and then withdraw. May we feel that we have not to drink of an intermittent spring, nor to work with an occasional industry! III. THE POSITION OF THIS FULNESS IS ENCOURAGING TO US IN THE MATTER OF OBTAINING IT. It is "in Him," where you can receive it, in your Brother, who loves to give it. It is yours. Since Christ is yours, all that is in Him is yours. It pleases God for you to partake of it. It is a matter for gratitude that it is not placed in us, for then we should not have to go so often to Christ; nor in an angel, who would not be so attractive as Christ. IV. WE OUGHT TO USE THIS FULNESS. 1. Believe in great things. 2. Expect them. 3. Attempt them. 4. Do not talk about this, but set about it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The fulness of Christ* :—The fulness of power which creation manifests, and the fulness of glory which the Church reveals, and the fulness of grace which the Godhead contains, dwell in Christ. That is His fulness. But oh, "how small a portion is heard of Him!" (Job xxvi. 14). A little child is led down to our sea-coast, and is told, "That is the ocean"; a little child is taken to the sea-coast in Canada, and is told, "That is the ocean"; and a little child is taken to the sea-coast in Australia, and is told, "That is the ocean." But the ocean fills the intervening two thousand five hundred miles between the first and second, the fourteen thousand miles between the second and third, and the fifteen thousand miles between the third and the first. They have seen the ocean, but its fulness fills all that lies between them, and all that is beyond the horizon which bounds their vision. (*H. Brooke.*) *No limit to the fulness in Christ* :—I have felt it an interesting thing to stand by the grassy edge of a rolling river, and think how it has been rolling on for six thousand years, slaking the thirst and watering the fields of a hundred generations, and yet there is no sign of waste or want there; and it is an interesting thing to mark the sun rise above the shoulder of a mountain, or where the sky is thick with clouds to see him leap from his ocean bed, and think he has melted the snows of so many winters, revived the verdure of so many springs, painted the flowers of so many summers, and ripened the corn of so many autumns, and yet is as big and as brilliant as ever, his eye not dimmed, his strength not abated, and his floods of glory none the less for centuries of profusion. But what is that rolling river, what is yon bright sun, but images of the blessed fulness that is in Jesus Christ, a fulness that should encourage the most hopeless of you to hope, a fulness that should prevail upon the vilest sinner to come, and a fulness that should animate the efforts of missionaries and of missionary societies to go on in the strength of Him who has all power in earth and heaven, who shall carry on His triumphs till the whole world has been subdued, and all the nations of this world and its kingdoms shall "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Fulness of Christ cannot be supplemented* :—Truly the revelation is by no means scant, for there is vastly more revealed in the person of Christ than we shall be likely to learn in this mortal life, and even eternity will not be too long for the discovery of all the glory of God which shines forth in the person of the Word made flesh. Those who would supplement Christianity had better first add to the brilliance of the sun or the fulness of the sea. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) And having made peace by the blood of His Cross.—It is great to "reconcile"; greater "through Himself"; greater, again, "through His blood"; greatest of all "through His Cross." Here are five things to be admired—reconciliation, to God, through Himself, by death, by the Cross. (*Chrysostom.*) *The Reconciler* :—I. BY NATURE MAN IS AT ENMITY WITH GOD. As God is love, so the carnal mind is enmity; this being so much the nature, essence, element of its existence, that if you took away the enmity it would cease to be. It is not always in activity, but sins, like seeds, lie dormant, and only await circumstances to develop them.

This is a doctrine into which the believer does not need to be reasoned. He feels it. The text takes it for granted; for what need can there be to make peace between friends? Not friends require to be reconciled, only foes. But does God appear as reciprocating our enmity, as the enemy of man? No; not even when He condemns him. He does not hate the sinner, though He hates his sins. He hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked. II. GOD DESIRES TO BE RECONCILED TO HIS ENEMIES. 1. Man stands upon his dignity. The injured says to the injurer—and each generally thinks not himself, but the other such—"He is to come to me; I am not to go to him." You may tell him that it is noble to make the first advances. "No," he says, "he must acknowledge his offence, and I will not refuse my hand." Strange terms for those to stand on who know the grace of God. If God had so dealt with us, we should have gone to hell. 2. Does God stand upon His dignity, the justice of the case? If ever any might, it was He. No, He takes the humiliation to Himself, and might be supposed to be the injurer, not the injured. Veiling His majesty, and leaving heaven to seek our door, He stands, knocks, waits there, beseeching us as though it were a favour to be reconciled. Salvation has its fountain, not in the Cross, but in the bosom of the Father. III. TO MAKE OUR PEACE WITH GOD, JESUS CHRIST LAID DOWN HIS LIFE. 1. The price of pardon was nothing less than "the blood of God." 2. Purchasing our peace at such a price, God has done more for us than for all the universe besides. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The atonement*:—I. The influence of the blood of the Cross on God. "Peace" cannot mean the actual reconciliation of man to God, for it is prior to and with the design of afterwards effecting it. It must therefore have been peace that looked toward God, for He is the only other party to the enmity. But this could not have been a change in God Himself or His purposes, for He is immutable; nor any alteration in His feelings towards sin, for that must ever be the abominable thing which He hates; still less the purchase of His love for man, for the whole purpose of reconciliation sprang out of His "pleasure." But it is the effect produced by the death of Christ upon God's moral government, so that it became possible for Him to forgive righteously. It will follow—1. That they are greatly in error who maintain that the only purpose of Christ's death was to reconcile man to God by the simple manifestation of Divine love. The fact is there are two elements in the Cross—love and righteousness—and we must allow neither to overshadow the other. If we do, in one case the gospel will assume the appearance of indifference to evil, in the other it will be made to assume an appearance of terror. 2. That they are greatly in error who make little of the death of Christ. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." II. The blood of the Cross as it respects man. "Things on earth" may perhaps be taken to mean the whole lower creation which "groans and travails in pain," &c.; but as the curse passed on the earth through man, so must the blessing. How, then, are men reconciled to God? More than pardon through the satisfaction of God's justice was needed; for sin has not only broken the law, but filled the sinner's heart with enmity against God. But—1. The atonement of Christ has also secured the Holy Spirit for the regeneration of human hearts. 2. Then the Spirit uses the story of Christ's love and death to remove the enmity. All along the sinner has been misjudging God; but when he, through the Spirit, is led to see that God has given Christ to secure his pardon, he discovers that he has done God the foulest wrong, and returns in penitence and affection to Him. III. The blood of the Cross as it affects angels. They, of course, cannot be reconciled in the strict sense of the term; but the work of Christ has let them see further into the heart of God, drawn them nearer to Him, and given them a higher degree of blessedness. Conclusion: 1. All obstacles have been taken out of the way of a sinner's salvation as far as God is concerned. If they are not saved, it is because they reject God's overtures of reconciliation. 2. If the sinner passes from earth unreconciled, there is no salvation for him. The text says nothing of "things under the earth." (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Peace through the blood of the Cross*:—I. THE FATHER MAKES THIS PEACE. This is noteworthy. A different representation might have been given—has been given elsewhere. Christ is our peace, and through Him we can approach the Father without dismay. But the teaching here is that the great transaction of the Cross was not needed to enlist the interest of the Father, or to render Him willing to rescue us, or to procure our love. It was His love that procured the Cross. The Son can do nothing of Himself, but delights to do the will of the Father. II. THIS PEACE HAS BEEN MADE. 1. The idea

is not that war has ceased. (1) Alas! it has not in our world. (2) Not in the human heart (ver. 21). (3) Nor in other spheres (Eph. vi. 12). 2. But it has been made in this sense that, so far as the earth's populations are concerned, an armistice has been proclaimed by the Lord Paramount of the universe. A halt has been called to the legions of retribution. All the steps have been taken by the Divine Governor that were needful to render it a fit, safe, and glorious thing on His part to conclude peace, and has sent messengers to proclaim peace to them that are afar off and to them that are nigh. III. He has made peace THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS. The idea is that at a very great cost He has made the peace. The Father while infinitely loving the Son saw it to be a fitting thing to surrender Him to a cruel death. But in the endurance of the crucifixion there was a manifestation of high regard for the law, hatred to sin, and love of the sinner. IV. HE IS NOW LABOURING TO SECURE THE ACCEPTANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS PEACE. Not only did the Divine Father make peace 1,800 years ago, and then leave sinners to accept it or reject it, indifferent as to the result. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Both Father and Son are working together at every point in the world of matter and on every heart in the world of mind. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Peace by the blood of Christ*:—There is a young girl in heaven now, once a member of our Church. I went with one of my beloved deacons to see her when she was very near her departure. She was in the last stage of consumption. She said to me, "It is sad to be so very weak, but I think, if I had my choice, I would rather be here than be in health, for it is very precious to me. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I am waiting for the moment when He shall send His chariot of fire to take me up to Him." I put the question, "Have you not any doubts?" "No, none, sir; why should I? I clasp my arms around the neck of Christ." "And have not you any fear about your sins?" "No, sir; they are all forgiven. I trust the Saviour's precious blood." "And do you think you will be as brave as this when you come actually to die?" "Not if He leaves me, sir; but He will never leave me, for He has said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind.—*Reconciliation by Christ*:—1. There are only two kinds of goodness possible, that of those who have never erred, that of those who have been recovered. It is plain that ours must be the latter. 2. Appointed to these are two kinds of happiness, the blessedness of entire ignorance of guilt, and the blessedness of forgiveness, the latter of which is superior in intensity and fulness. 3. There are two kinds of friendship, that which has never had a shock, and that which, after having been doubted, is at last made sure. The happiness of the last is perhaps the greater, as illustrated by the parable of the Prodigal. This leads us to our subject—*Reconciliation*. I. *ESTRANGEMENT*. 1. Its cause. "Wicked works," voluntary deeds. Sin is not merely a foreign disease introduced into the constitution. You are a responsible individual, have done deeds that are wrong of the mind, hand, tongue. 2. Its result. (1) Alienation—the feeling that God is our enemy. Alienation was a more forcible expression then. There is now little difference between the alien and the citizen. But the alien from the Jewish commonwealth had no power to share in its religious privileges, and was popularly regarded as a "dog." In the Roman commonwealth the word had a still stronger meaning; it was to be separated from the authority and protection of Roman law, and to be subject to degrading penalties. Hence Paul's protest at Philippi against scourging, as he was not an alien. Paul's conception of alienation is given in Eph. ii. 12: it is to have no place in the universe, to feel God your enemy, to be estranged from Him and banished from His presence. What is this but hell? (2) Enmity against God. The illustration of the process we have seen in everyday life. Strength of attachment settles down to indifference, and at last to hatred. A secret sense of wrong intrudes, and we cannot escape, save by throwing the blame somewhere. By degrees a cankered spot begins, you irritate it until the mortification becomes entire, and alienation settles down into animosity. And such is the history of alienation from God. Different characters arrive at it in different ways. (a) Weak minds throw the blame on circumstances, and regard themselves as victims of a cruel fate, the blame belonging not to them, but God. (b) In the case of stronger and more vicious characters, humiliation degrades, and degradation produces anger. The outcast turns with defiance on respectability merely because it is respectable. So some sinners stand at bay, as it were, to their Maker. II. *RECONCILIATION*. 1. Christ has reconciled man to God. (1) By exhibiting the character of God. The sacrifice of Christ was the voice of God proclaiming love,

(2) When the mind has comprehended this, then comes the blessed feeling of reconciliation. The change of feeling within us changes God to us. 2. Christ has reconciled man to man. (1) Men have tried other methods. Let the political economist come forward with his principle of selfishness and tell us that this is that by which alone the wealth of nations can accrue. He may get a nation in which there are a wealthy few and a miserable many, but not a brotherhood of Christians. Try the principle of moral rule; say that men should love one another—will that make them? You may come forward with the crushing rule of political authority. Papal Rome has tried that and failed. She bound up the masses of the race as a gigantic iceberg; but she could give only a temporary principle of cohesion. (2) Therefore we come back to the Cross: through this alone we learn that there is one Father, one Elder Brother, in whom all can be brothers. Catch the spirit of that Cross, the spirit of giving, suffering, loving, and man will be reconciled to man. 3. By the Redeemer's atonement man becomes reconciled to himself. That is necessary because it is so hard to forgive ourselves. You may obtain remission, but you cannot get back the feeling of self-respect and unity within. The sacrifice of Christ was surrender to the will of God; go and sacrifice yourself for the happiness of others, and the calm feeling will come. 4. Man becomes reconciled to duty. There is no discord more terrible than that between man and duty. There are few of us who fancy we have found our proper places in this world. We think that we are fit for higher things. But study that marvellous Life and you will see that the whole of its details are ungenial, mean, trivial, wretched circumstances. It is not by change of circumstances, but by fitting our spirits to the circumstances in which God has placed us, that we can be reconciled to life and duty. (If the duties be not noble, let us ennoble them by doing them in a noble spirit. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The nature and issues of reconciliation*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S PAST CONDITION. 1. Alienation. The idea is that of belonging to a different community, morally at a distance from God. Man's spirit formed for God is naturally averse from Him. No sooner was our first father guilty than he fled from the presence of his Maker. (1) This alienation is spiritual death, for the soul cannot realize its true life away from God. (2) The spirit of alienation is hostility. 2. The seat of this enmity is in the thought and feeling. It need not be apparent. If we are wilfully separated from one to whom we owe love and allegiance, hard thoughts of him to justify ourselves will arise and then enmity of heart. Men may profess to like an ideal God, but the God of the Bible who claims their affection and service is no object of attraction to the natural mind. Take any gathering of men and you can introduce no subject more forbidding than that of God. 3. This hostility has an outward embodiment in the practical sphere of wicked works not necessarily into flagrant vice. Every act of disobedience is evil, however compatible with social virtue and refinement, because rebellion against God. 4. This is a melancholy indictment, but a true one. Perhaps the darkest count against humanity is that in regions of civilization and culture there can be so much that is pleasant and elevating without any recognition of God. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S PRESENT PRIVILEGE. 1. It is not God who is said to be reconciled. God is reconciled in Christ, and is seeking to reconcile the world unto Himself. 2. In this reconciliation—(1) Friendship is restored. The alienation and enmity are removed, and the sinner brought nigh. No friendship can be compared with this: that of the world worketh death, this is life and glory. (2) Fellowship is resumed. Man was formed for this, but sin interrupted it, and now in it man finds his highest enjoyment. 3. But how does it come? "In the body of His flesh," &c. (1) The assumption of a human body brought Jesus into fraternal relationship with men. (2) His death brings us into relationship. 4. The apostle utterly demolishes these theories which make little of the death of Christ while they profess to make much of His life and teaching. III. THE CHRISTIAN'S FUTURE PROSPECT (VER. 23). (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The personal blessings of reconciliation*:—I. SIN HAS PLACED MAN IN ANTAGONISM TO GOD. 1. Man is estranged from God. Sin severs the soul from God. The principle of cohesion—the consciousness of rectitude—is gone, and the sinner, breaking away from the centre of all goodness, drifts into the wilderness of alienation. Sin leads man to shun the Divine presence and disregard the Divine overtures. It is a state of danger and spiritual death. How few are conscious of it! 2. Man is hostile to God. Enmity follows estrangement, and both have their seat in the mind. The mind of man opposes the mind of God, sets up a rival kingdom, and organizes an active rebellion against the Divine Ruler (Rom. viii. 7). If the hostility is not always

open, it is in the mind. 3. Man's estrangement and hostility are evident in his actions. II. MAN IS RECONCILED TO GOD IN CHRIST. 1. The distinguished blessing. "Now hath He reconciled." 2. The gracious medium of the blessing. "In the body of His flesh through death." III. THE DIVINE PURPOSE IN RECONCILIATION IS TO PROMOTE MAN'S HIGHEST BLESSEDNESS. 1. The highest blessedness of man consists in his moral purity. "To present you holy." 2. In His personal blamelessness. 3. In His freedom from censure. (G. Barlow.)

Vers. 22, 23. To present you holy and unblameable and unrepreeable in His sight.—*The ultimate purpose of reconciliation*.—I. THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE WORK OF CHRIST. 1. In "present" there is possibly a sacrificial allusion (Rom. xii. 1), or the more eloquent metaphor of the bringing of the bride to the husband by the friend of the bridegroom (2 Cor. ii. 2; Eph. v. 27), or perhaps it means simply "to sit in the presence of." The reference is to the day of judgment (2 Cor. iv. 14). In the light of that revealing day His purpose is that we shall stand "holy," i.e., devoted to God, and therefore pure, "without blemish," as the offerings had to be, and "unrepreeable," against whom no charge can be brought. They must be spotless indeed who are "without fault before the throne." 2. All the lines of thought in the preceding section lead up to this peak. The meaning of God in creation and redemption cannot be fathomed without taking into view the future perfecting of men. The Christian ideal of the possibilities for men is the noblest vision that can animate our hopes. Nothing short of this satisfies God's heart, for it has to be connected with "It pleased the Father." Nor will anything less exhaust the power of the reconciling Christ. His Cross and passion reach no adequate result short of the perfecting of the saints. We ought, then, to keep before us this as the crowning object of Christianity; not to make us happy except as a consequence of holiness. Nothing less should satisfy us. II. THE CONDITIONS ON WHICH THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THAT PURPOSE DEPENDS. 1. Generally speaking, a steadfast adherence to the gospel. "If ye continue in the exercise of your faith," This continuance is explained—(1) Positively, "grounded," i.e., built into a foundation, and "steadfast," as banded into the firm rock, and so partaking of its fixedness. (2) Negatively, "not moved away," a process that may be continually going on, and in which, by some force constantly acting from without, they may be imperceptibly pushed off from the foundation, i.e., the hope evoked or held out by the gospel. 2. Some plain lessons may be drawn from these words. (1) There is an "if." However great the powers of Christ, and deep the desire, and fixed the purpose of God, no fulfilment of these is possible except on the condition of our habitual exercise of faith. The gospel does not act on men by magic. "He could not do, . . . because of their unbelief." (2) It must be present faith that leads to present results. We cannot make an arrangement by which we exercise faith wholesale once for all, and secure a delivery of its blessings in small quantities for a time after. (3) If our lives are to be firm we must have a foundation outside of ourselves. If my practical life be not built on Christ the blows of circumstance will make it reel and stagger. (4) This Christ-derived steadfastness will make us able to resist influences that would move us away from the hope of the gospel. If we do not look to our moorings we shall drift away down stream and never know we are moving. Many a man is completely unaware how completely his Christian faith has gone till some crisis comes when he needs it. III. A THREE-FOLD MOTIVE FOR ADHERENCE TO THE GOSPEL. 1. "The gospel which ye heard." Paul would have them recall what they heard at their conversion, and tamper with no teaching inconsistent with it. He also appeals to their experience. "Have these truths become less precious?" To us the same appeal comes. The word has been sounding in our ears since childhood. The "one thing" we know is not to be lightly abandoned. 2. This gospel was "preached" in all creation under heaven," whereas the heretical teachings only belonged to a class. All errors are transient and limited; but the gospel can go into any corner under heaven. 3. "Whereof I Paul am made a minister." (1) This is not merely an appeal to their affection, though that is perfectly legitimate. (2) He puts stress upon the fact that he became a minister, as being an evidence of Christianity; which indeed it is. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *Holiness through Christ*.—"What are you doing here by yourself?" asked a man of his neighbour one day. "I am reading a book that has only two leaves," was the reply. "Then it won't take you long to read it," said the other. Months passed away, and they met again. "Well, what are you doing now?" "I am still reading my little book." "What! and only two leaves

in it?" "Yes; a white leaf and a red one." "I don't understand you." "Well, the white leaf is the holiness of God, and the red leaf is the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. When I study the white leaf, and see my sin in the light of God's holiness, I am glad to turn to the red leaf and rest my eye on the blood of Jesus. And when I realize the preciousness and efficacy of the Saviour's blood, I feel a longing for holiness, and turn again to the white leaf. The little book will occupy me all my life, and I expect it will be my joyful meditation through eternity." (*New Encyclopædia of Anecdotes.*)

Ver. 23. If ye continue in the faith.—*The condition of man's final blessedness.*—Man's final blessedness depends on—I. HIS UNSWERVING CONTINUANCE IN THE FAITH. There is implied a continuance in—1. The doctrines of the faith. What a man believes has a powerful influence in moulding his character. Unbelief lures the soul from its confidence, sets it adrift amidst the cross currents of doubt, and exposes it to moral shipwreck. The soul's safety is ensured not by an infatuated devotion to mere opinions, but by an intelligent and constant faith in Divine verities. 2. In the profession of the faith. The believer is a witness for the truth, and it is imperative that he should bear his testimony (Rom. x. 9, 10; Matt. x. 32). 3. The practice of the faith. Faith supplies the motive and rule of all right conduct. 4. Continuance in the faith must be permanent. "Grounded and settled." In order to permanency in the faith, the truth must be—(1) Apprehended intelligently. (2) Embraced cordially. (3) Maintained courageously. II. HIS UNCHANGING ADHERENCE TO THE GOSPEL HOPE. 1. The gospel reveals a bright future. 2. The gospel to be effectual must come in contact with individual mind. "Which ye have heard." Epaphras had declared to them the Divine message. 3. The gospel is adapted to universal man. "Which was preached to every creature which is under heaven." 4. The gospel invested the apostle with an office of high authority. "Whereof I, Paul, am made a minister." There is an implied possibility of relinquishing our hold of gospel hope. The multiplicity and fulness of our blessings may prove a snare to us; prosperity tempts to relax watchfulness. Our retention of the gospel hope is rendered immovable—(1) By constant prayer; (2) Growing acquaintance with the Word of promise; (3) Continual anticipation of future bliss. (*G. Barlow.*) *Our life-work.*—In the end of vers. 22 and 28 we learn the great object of salvation. We should be fellow-workers with God in this (Phil. ii. 12). Like an artist student copying the work of a great master under his superintendence, we must "work out" the beauty of Christ in our lives, though the great Master Himself must give the finishing touch and make it perfect. Here we are told what the Christian's course of conduct must be if this end is attained. I. THE FOUNDATION, the starting-point, "the gospel." 1. From various expressions in the chapter we can learn what Paul means by "gospel." (1) News of a personal Saviour (vers. 20, 28; cf. 1 Cor. iii. 11). (2) The blood of the Cross (ver. 20; cf. Heb. ix. 22). (3) An indwelling Saviour (ver. 27) The searching medicine: the healing balm; the pledge and security of salvation. 2. The responsibility of the Colossians in connection with this gospel. (1) "Which ye have heard." The hearing has put them in a new position (John xv. 24). (2) It was preached universally. Every one now has the offer. (3) Paul a minister of this gospel. The gospel you have heard from Epaphras your minister is mine. I got it by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. i. 12). 3. This gospel demands faith and hope. These, like light and heat, go together; the two poles on which Christian life turns. Faith fixes the lower end of the ladder on the Rock, and Hope rests the higher end in the promised glory. II. PERSEVERANCE THEREIN. 1. Faith must be kept in continual exercise. Religion is a life of faith. (1) Continuance a necessary consequence of true faith. Three things are wanted for a good harvest—good seed, soil, sunshine, and shower. Having these the harvest is a necessity. So in spiritual things; the only thing we have to do with is the soil; the seed is good, and sunshine and shower are assured. If the soil "receives" and retains the Word, there must be "first the blade, then the ear," &c. (2) Here, then, is the test of faith. Is it the faith that continues and overcomes the world? That opens the soil, and draws down the roots into its bosom? That keeps the vessels filled with oil while the virgins wait? That draws the fruit-bearing sap from the True Vine? (3) The connection of faith is not loose and wavering. "Grounded" like the foundation of Eddystone—a grip—an identification. "Settled"—seated, restful, satisfied, undoubting. 2. Hope meanwhile is steadily maintained. We have the object of hope in two words—"with Him," "like Him." That consummation we are never to lose

sight of. Faith helps here; it makes substantial the things hoped for, and makes evident the things not seen: the telescope which brings within the range of hope's vision the unseen. Conclusion:—1. There is danger implied in this waning, and experience shows how real it is. 2. Steady progress inculcated. To move on the only way to keep from moving away. The unseen should act as a magnet drawing us to itself. "Looking for and hasting unto." (*J. J. Black, LL.D.*) Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.—*Stand fast*:—It has cost many a soul a great struggle to obtain this hope, and when attained do not think that the conflict is over. It then becomes more fierce. Be not moved away, however—I. FROM THE SUBJECT OF THAT HOPE. What is that? It is the hope—1. Of full salvation, that we shall be "presented holy, unblameable," &c. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself," &c. 2. Of final perseverance, that He who has begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. 3. Of the resurrection, Christ brought not one-half, but the whole trinity of our manhood. 4. Of the second advent. 5. Of being, not in purgatory, but for ever with the Lord. II. FROM THE GROUND OF THAT HOPE. 1. The rich, free, sovereign grace of God. He who could save the dying thief can save all. 2. The merit of Christ, which is the only ground on which God saves men. 3. The Divine pledge that whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, &c. 4. The immutability of God. 5. The infallibility of the Scriptures. III. HOW WE MAY BE MOVED AWAY FROM THAT HOPE. 1. By a conceit of ourselves. "Let him that thinketh he standeth," &c. 2. By despondency. Satan does not mind whether you jump up or jump down from the rock. The least sin ought to make you humble, the greatest ought not to make you despair. 3. By false teaching. If you have been persuaded that Christ is not Divine, or not the only Priest, or that you have merit of your own, you are removed. 4. By hoping to live by feelings instead of faith. 5. By a dazzle of intellect and "modern thought." 6. By persecution, sneers, and ridicule. IV. WHY WE WILL NOT BE MOVED AWAY FROM THAT HOPE. 1. Because there is nothing to take its place. 2. Because if we did we should soon be in bondage. 3. Because we should become mean, miserable wretches who have deserted their Saviour. 4. Because it would be something like a soldier entrenched in an impregnable fortress accepting an invitation to come out. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A good hope distinguished*:—I. ITS DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS. 1. It is in harmony with God's plan of salvation. 2. It springs from the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. 3. It is grounded on the truth and power of God. Not upon impressions and feelings—no, but upon the declarations, promises, and Almighty power of Him who has "laid up the hope for us in heaven." II. ITS INVARIABLE INFLUENCE. 1. It produces holiness (1 John iii. 2, 3). 2. It begets Christian resignation (Heb. vi. 18, 19). 3. It enkindles pious zeal (1 Thess. i. 3). 4. It lights up the valley of death. Reflections:—1. It is dismal to be without hope (Eph. ii. 12). 2. It is madness to deceive ourselves. 3. It is necessary to be watchful and persevering. (*Congregational Pulpit.*) *Changeful Christians*:—Oh, how many there are that are never settled. The tree which should be transplanted every week would soon die. Nay, if it were moved, no matter how skilfully, once every year, no gardener would expect fruit from it. How many Christians there be that are transplanting themselves constantly, even as to their doctrinal sentiments. There be some who believe according to the last speaker; and there be others who do not know what they do believe, but they believe almost anything that is told them. Men have come to believe that it does not matter what they do believe—who are like the weathercock upon the steeple, they will turn just as the wind blows. As good Mr. Whitfield said, "You might as well measure the moon for a suit of clothes as tell their doctrinal sentiments," for they are ever changing. Now, I pray that this may be taken away from any of you, if this be your weakness, and that you may be settled. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Immovable Christians*:—Cyprian, when on his road to suffer martyrdom, was told by the emperor that he would give him time to consider whether he had not better cast a grain of incense into the fire, in honour of idols, than die so degraded a death. The martyr nobly answered, "There needs no deliberation in the case." John Huss was offered a pardon when at the stake, about to suffer for his attachment to Christ, if he would recant; his reply was, "I am here ready to suffer death." Anne Askew when asked under similar circumstances to avoid the flames, answered, "I came not here to deny my God and Master." Mr. Thomas Hawkes, an Essex gentleman, said, on a like occasion, "If I had a hundred bodies, I would suffer them all to be torn in pieces, rather than recant." When the cruel Bonner told John Ardy of the pain connected with burning, and how hard it must be to

endure it, with a view to leading the martyr to recant, he replied, "If I had as many lives as I have hairs on my head, I would lose them all in the fire, before I would lose Christ." Galeazius, a gentleman of great wealth, who suffered martyrdom at St. Angelo, in Italy, being much entreated by his friends to recant, replied, "Death is much sweeter to me with the testimony of truth, than life with its least denial." (*Arrine.*) Which was preached to every creature.—There may be seven observations gathered out of this speech of the apostle. 1. That doctrine only is true which is agreeable to the doctrine of the apostles, by which the world was converted to God. 2. That no power is like the power of the Word of God. Here it converts a world in a short time. And our eyes have beheld that it hath almost in as short time restored a world of men from the power of antichrist. 3. That the words "all" and "every one" are not always in Scripture to be understood universally of all the singular persons in the world, as the universalists conceive. 4. They were but a few fishermen that did this great work, and they were much opposed and persecuted, and in some less matters they jarred sometime among themselves. Whence we may observe that doctrine may be exceeding effectual, though (1) but few teach it; (2) though they be but of mean estate and condition; (3) though it be opposed by cross and contrary teaching; (4) though it be persecuted; (5) though the people be indisposed and nozzled in sin and superstition, as the Gentiles were; (6) though the preacher be often restrained; (7) though there be some dissension in less matters. 5. That in the conversion of sinners God is no respecter of persons; men of any age, nation, sex, condition, life or quality, may be converted by the gospel. 6. It is that preaching is the ordinary means to convert every creature, so as ordinarily there is none converted but by preaching. 7. If any one ask what shall become of those nations, or particular persons, that never yet heard of the gospel, I answer, the way of God in divers things is not revealed, and His judgments are a great deep. It belongs to us to look to ourselves to whom the gospel is come. (*N. Byfield.*)

Ver. 24. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you.—*Joy in suffering*:—The vast region of human sorrow is to most a dark and dreary desert. But if we saw truly we should find many streams of refreshment, many sunny spots, and on all sides evidences of the Divine tenderness. Here we find Paul at home in the region of suffering—rejoicing amid mysteries which fill most men with darkness. And no wonder, for he had been led to gather that his sufferings were supplementary to those of Christ, and essential to the well-being of the Church. I. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST. 1. This is a subject of which we can know little. All the notes that have been marshalled into harmony by the great rulers of song tell most of the unexplored regions of music. The fire which sparkles from the flint when struck with steel tells most of the unspent fire within. And so all the outward manifestations of Christ suffering tells most of the inexpressible anguish of His heart. That it was terrible beyond human thought is indicated—(1) by the prophecies concerning the Man of Sorrows; (2) by His sudden death of a broken heart; (3) by the exquisite sensibility of His holy nature. 2. But while it is impossible to know fully His sufferings, some facts concerning them are revealed. (1) They were borne voluntarily for men. (2) The spring of His sacrificing of Himself was His infinite love. (3) Consequently His sufferings were not only compatible with His unspeakable joy, but were the cause of what was unspeakable in it (*Heb. xii. 3*). 3. Christ in His life of sacrifice declared the Father's love for men, and in His life mirrored the life of God. God is ever spending Himself for His children, and is ever unspent. "He that spared not," &c. We infer, then, that the purest joy of heaven is sacrifice, and since Christ is the firstborn among many brethren, that He should furnish the ideal of all true living; which throws light upon the text. II. THE SUFFERINGS OF PAUL. These were twofold; those which He voluntarily endured for the sake of the Church, and those which were personal and inevitable. 1. He did not seek suffering for its own sake. As an end it was contemptible, but as a means to the well-being of the universe it was sublime. Paul's joy was not in the suffering, but in the love of which suffering was the medium of expression. As the love of fatherland inspires the patriot to bleed for his country, so the love of men made the apostle ready to sacrifice anything for them. And as he did so he was filled with Divine ecstasy. 2. But His love for Christ was a richer source of gladness amid His suffering. We want always to know all we can about those we love. One of the great ends of Paul's life was to know Christ, and the idea of being in fellowship with Christ in His sufferings was

full of glory to Him. He would be in a position for realizing more of that love which passeth knowledge. Love's fullest revelations can only be made in suffering. The mother never knew the strength and blessedness of a mother's love until her child became ill, and until she lost herself in all-consuming love for it. It has been the common testimony of Christ's most afflicted ones, that in the hour of their greatest suffering they have had the profoundest sense of Christ's love. Christ meets us where Love's grandest revelations are possible. There Paul rejoiced in His sufferings.

III. THE SUPPLEMENTARY CHARACTER OF PAUL'S SUFFERINGS TO CHRIST'S AND THEIR SUBSERVENCY TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE CHURCH. 1. There cannot be anything meritorious in suffering. "After ye have done all, ye are unprofitable servants." Yet there is a vicarious element in suffering borne for others. Our Lord's life affected men through the idea of sacrifice. In the Cross we see sin condemned and the glory of the Divine rectitude and mercy displayed. But Christ is no longer with us, and His sufferings are over. How, then, shall we convey the idea of His self-sacrificing love? By preaching partly, but mostly in the imitation of it in the self-sacrificing lives of His people. Thus do Christians "fill up" that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ. 2. The sufferings of Christian people are among the chief means of deepening and enlarging their power of sympathy. In Christ sympathy was one of the mightiest forces for saving men. "The bruised reed will He not break," &c. Sympathy is the secret of true blessedness and usefulness. Christ was perfected through suffering.—"And in that He suffered," &c.—and by having it perfected in Himself the apostle felt that He was "filling up," &c. 3. Affliction is everywhere regarded in the Scriptures as a necessity for the Christian in this world. When sanctified it breaks down our wills, subdues our hearts, moulds us more and more into the likeness of Christ. How does this affect the Church? Is it not Christ's body? The increased life of the individual members then, must affect the whole body through the spiritual veins and nerves and joints which bind the members to each other, and all to Christ the Head. The lowliest sufferer, therefore, is not suffering in vain, he is "filling up," &c. (*H. Simon*).

Joy in suffering:—A great pleasure in giving. No pleasure so great as to be able to give or serve. Pleasure in personally going without, in order to give to another, or serve another; that is, in putting yourself to pain for the sake of another. Our sufferings really are a giving to others and serving others, though possibly we may not see how. It is very often the case that losses or pain do a great deal of good to the person who suffers them. When we know that a pain or loss of ours does some good to some one else, to some one whom we truly love, then it is a very different thing—then we rejoice in it. The mother rejoices in her pain for her child. In this way, look at the misery and sorrow in the world; to think of it as being borne, not by each one for himself, but by every one for others; as serving others in some unseen way. We shall see in the future state how our pain was borne for others, and be glad that thus we served. God has revealed to us in Christ both that His own life is a life of sacrifice and service, and that ours truly is so too. The work of making mankind perfect is helped on by all that we are called upon to bear. We help God's work by our sorrows. They are God's special gift to us of serving; it is God's best gift to us—the privilege He gave His Son—to be used and sacrificed for the best and greatest end. The result which glorifies and makes good the painful part of human life is one that we cannot see. To make sacrifice for others always joyful to us, our own life must be made more perfect. (*James Hinton*.)

The joy of suffering for the Church:—A stolid indifference to, and heroic endurance of, suffering, was not unknown to paganism. But Christianity alone has taught us to rejoice in it. Observe—I. THE REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER OF THE APOSTLE'S SUFFERINGS. 1. He represented the suffering Saviour. We are not to suppose that Christ's sufferings were incomplete. His passion was the one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for sin. No one could represent this. But while His personal sufferings are over He so thoroughly identifies Himself with His people that their afflictions become His own. Paul represented the suffering Saviour in what he endured for Him and the Church. Thus He could say, "The sufferings of Christ abound in us;" and so may the Church as Christ's representative to-day (*Matt. xxv.*). 2. The sufferings of the apostle supplemented what was lacking in the afflictions of Christ. "Fill up." Every age of the church has its measure of suffering. The church is built up by repeated acts of self-denial in successive individuals and generations. They continue the work which Christ began. The great Mediator suffered to effect our salvation; and His people, on their part, fill up the suffering needed for the perfection of their spiritual life, and for the full display of the Divine glory. II.

THE VICARIOUS CHARACTER OF THE APOSTLE'S SUFFERINGS. "For his body's sake, which is the Church." 1. The apostle's sufferings for the Church (1) confirmed the faith of her converts; (2) were for the consolation of the Church. "Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation." "Great hearts can only be made by great troubles. The spade of trouble digs the reservoir of comfort deeper, and makes more room for the water of consolation." When James Bainham, who suffered under the reign of Henry VIII., was in the midst of the flames which had half consumed his arms and legs, he said aloud: "O ye Papists, ye look for miracles, and here now you may see a miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain than if I were in a bed of down; but it is to me a bed of roses"; (3) tended to promote its increase. The more the Egyptians afflicted the Hebrews the more they multiplied. The devil's way of extinguishing goodness, is God's way of advancing it. III. THE HIGH-TONED SPIRIT OF THE APOSTLE'S SUFFERINGS. "Who now rejoice." Nature shrinks from suffering. It is altogether above nature to triumph in it. It is Christianity alone that inspires us with joy in tribulation. (G. Barlow.) *Suffering working perfection*:—Just as a certain amount of heat in the furnace is required to produce certain definite effects upon the metal, so it would seem as though a certain definite amount of suffering, recognized by the infinite wisdom of God, were necessary to work out the perfection of that body of which Christ is the Head. As we each cheerfully and thankfully bear our share, what a joy to think that, along with the Head, we are contributing in our measure to the perfecting of the whole. (W. M. H. Aitken, M.A.)

Vers. 25-27. Whereof I am made a minister.—*The pre-eminent honour and sublime theme of the Christian ministry*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS A DIVINE INSTITUTION. 1. The Christian minister is divinely commissioned. "Dispensation" involves the idea of stewardship. 2. The true minister is charged with the most complete proclamation of the Divine Word. II. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEALS WITH A THEME OF PROFOUND SIGNIFICANCE AND INEFFABLE WORTH. 1. It is designated a mystery. The gospel is still a mystery to the unconverted. 2. It is a mystery unveiled to those who are morally fitted to understand it. "To His saints." God chose His own time for making it known. Like all the Divine procedures, the development was gradual, increasing in clearness and completeness as the fulness of time approached. It is an axiom in optics that the eye only sees what it brings with it the power to see; and in spiritual things the soul comprehends the revelation of God only as it is fitted by the Spirit. 3. The revelation of the mystery was an act of the Divine will. "To whom God would make known." There was nothing impelling Him to unfold it but His own good pleasure. 4. The revelation of the mystery endowed humanity with a vast inheritance of moral wealth. "What is the riches of the glory of this mystery." (1) This inheritance enriched the most needy. It was exhibited "among the Gentiles." (2) This inheritance includes the hope inspired by the indwelling Christ. "Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." *Lessons*—1. The Christian ministry involves solemn responsibilities. 2. The transcendent theme of the Christian ministry is divinely revealed. 3. Personal experience of the grace of God endows man with the clearest insight into its mystery and the most satisfying possession of its spiritual riches. (G. Barlow.) *Divine ordination to the ministry*:—If they say, "You have gifts for preaching, and you might have been a tolerable preacher if you had been properly ordained," I reply that I was properly ordained. My father ordained me. Ah! I was better ordained than that: my greater Father ordained me. He ordained me twice: first, when He put his hand on my head before I was born, and said, "Be a head;" and then, after I had carried it round a few years, when He stretched out His hand and touched my heart rather than my head, and said, "Be ordained again." First, He makes the head-piece to think; and then He touches the heart, and says, "Go preach My gospel." When a man has had that done to him, he is ordained. A pope could not make him any better; a bishop could not make him any better; a whole presbytery could not make him any better. (H. W. Beecher.) *St. Paul a proof of his gospel*:—This is not merely an appeal to their affection for him, though that is perfectly legitimate. Holy words may be holier because dear lips have taught them to us, and even the truth of God may allowably have a firmer hold upon our hearts because of our love for some who have ministered to us. It is a poor commentary on a preacher's work if, after long service to a congregation, his words do not come with power given to them by old affection and confidence. The humblest teacher who has done his master's errand will have some to whom

he can appeal, as Paul did, and urge them to keep hold of the message he has preached. But there is more than that in the apostle's mind. He was accustomed to quote the fact that he, the persecutor, had been made the messenger of Christ, as a living proof of the infinite mercy and power of that ascended Lord, whom His eyes saw on the road to Damascus. So here he puts stress on the fact that he became a minister as being an "evidence of Christianity." The history of his conversion is one of the strongest proofs of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. You know, he seems to say, what turned me from being a persecutor into an apostle. It was because I saw the living Christ, and "heard the words of His mouth," and I beseech you, listen to no words which make His dominion less sovereign, and His sole and sufficient work on the Cross less mighty. (A. Maclaren, D.D.)

Ver. 26. The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations. *The gospel mystery* :—The term "mystery," as here used twice, and often in this epistle, does not describe what is essentially incomprehensible, but rather what was hidden and is now revealed. The gospel is a mystery, but a mystery that is to be preached fully, and into which (as the word borrowed from the ancient mysteries in ver. 28 suggests) every man may be initiated. I. THE GOSPEL A MYSTERY. All religion deals with mystery. Genuine mystery is the stamp of a religious Divinity—false mystery is the counterfeit superstition stamp. In its aspect towards the vast, the infinite, the Divine, religion must always have some mystery to man. II. The gospel a mystery that was long secret from man. "The secret things belong unto God." There are hidden facts and laws in nature that science has only gradually discovered, or is now only gradually discovering; hidden moral meanings in nature and history that poets' sight only can descry, and poets' song only describe. There were hidden things in religion that only holy men of old, moved by the Holy Ghost, could reveal. III. The gospel is a mystery that is now fully revealed. Whatever may have been the guesses of nobler pagans, or the anticipations of patriarchs, or the predictions of prophets, it was only as the pale light of very early dawn upon the hills of antiquity. It was noon when Christ lived, taught, died. The seal was broken, the secret revealed. What secret? IV. The gospel is the revealed secret of God's universal redeeming love. Christ is fully proclaimed, and Christ is the mystery. In Him are all the treasures of God stored away. 1. All the mystery is proclaimed in Christ. As the rainbow has all possible colours in its wondrous arc, as the fabled music of the spheres has all possible tones in its chord, so in Christ is all the wisdom, righteousness, love of God. 2. All men may receive the blessings of this mystery. Christ, and Christ freely given to the Gentiles, given to be an indwelling power in them, is the great mystery which, as Paul dwelt in it, made Him proclaim it with newer and deepening joy. (U. R. Thomas.) I. THE MYSTERY. 1. The term is borrowed from the ancient systems in which certain rites and doctrines were communicated to the initiated (Phil. iv. 12, and the word "perfect," which means "initiated," in ver. 28). Potentous theories have been spun out of this word. The Greek mysteries implied secrecy; the rites were done in deep obscurity; the esoteric doctrines were muttered in the ear. The Christian mysteries are spoken on the housetop, nor does the word imply anything as to the comprehensibility of the doctrines or facts which are so called. 3. We talk about "mysteries," meaning thereby truths that transcend human faculties. But the New Testament mystery may be, and most frequently is, a fact perfectly comprehensible when once spoken. "Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep," &c. There is nothing incomprehensible in that. We should never have known it if we had not been told; but when told it is quite level with our faculties. The word is most frequently used in connection with the notion of declaring. It frequently occurs in this epistle and in the Ephesians, and in every instance but one refers to a fact perfectly plain when once made known—the entrance of the Gentiles into the Church. 4. Then it follows that "a steward of the mysteries" is simply a man who has truths, formerly unknown but now revealed, in charge to all who will hearken, and neither the claims of a priesthood nor the demand for the unquestioning submission of the intellect have any foundation in this much-abused term. II. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MYSTERY. 1. The wonderful fact that all barriers were broken down. He saw in that the proof and prophecy of the world-wide destination of the gospel. There is no greater revolution in history than the cutting loose, through Him, of Christianity from Judaism, and widening the Church to the width of the race. No wonder that he

was misunderstood and hated by Jewish Christians all his days. He thinks of these poor heathens and now Christians at Colossæ, and of many another little community in Judea, Asia, Greece, and Italy; and as he thinks of how a solid bond of brotherhood bound them together in spite of their differences of race and culture, the vision of the oneness of mankind in the Cross of Christ shines out before him as no other man had seen it till then. 2. That Christ dwell in their hearts. That dwelling reveals the exuberant abundance of glory. To Paul the "mystery" was all running over with riches, and blazing with fresh radiance, and the possession of Christ was a pledge of future blessedness. The closer we keep to Him the clearer will be our vision of that blessedness. Anything seems more credible to a man who has Christ abiding in Him, than that such a trifle as death should have power to end such a union. This hope is offered to all. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The mystery manifest*:—Christ, by His incarnation, answered the vague and unsatisfactory queries of the world. 1. The Second Person of the Godhead was suspected by the ancients to be the active agent of the unknown God. Seneca: "Whoever formed the universe, whether the Almighty God Himself, or that incorporeal reason which was the artificer of these vast concerns." 2. The ancients conceived this Second Person to stand to the First in the relation of a word to the thought which it expresses. Zoroaster: "O, Ormuzd, what is that great word given by God, that living and powerful word, which existed before the heavens, before the waters, before the earth, before the flocks?" Compare Philo's "Philosophy of the Logos" with the Introduction to John's Gospel. 3. The ancients looked for some incarnation of the Divine Word. Persian Serosh, Hindoo Vishnu. Plato: "It is necessary that a Lawgiver be sent from heaven to instruct men; and this Lawgiver must be more than a man." Jewish expectancy. 4. The ancients tried to furnish the ideal of perfect human character—e.g., the ideals of Confucius, Socrates, Seneca. The mythologic personages. Christ appeared manifestly (1) perfectly a man, (2) a perfect man, and challenged all moralists. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" 5. The ancients had the idea of atonement. Altars lined the track of history. Christ's cry when coming into the world: "A body hast thou prepared Me. Lo! I come to do thy will." John the Baptist's recognition: "Behold the Lamb of God!" 6. The ancients tried to demonstrate the perpetuity of human life. Our strongest points in the philosophy of immortality announced by Plato. The mythology of Greeks and Scandinavians. Christ's declaration, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," demonstrated by His resurrection. (*Homiletic Review*).

Ver. 27. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery.—*The gospel mystery*:—The gospel is the grand secret. To the mass of mankind it was utterly unknown, and the chosen people only perceived dimly through the smoke of sacrifices and the veil of types. It must ever have been a mystery but for revelation, and must be so still unless Christ comes to dwell within. Then all is clear. I. THE ESSENCE of this mystery is CHRIST. It is uncertain what is the antecedent to "which"—"mystery," "riches," or "glory." If it be mystery, then Christ is "the mystery of godliness"; if glory, Christ is the brightness of His Father's glory; if riches, there are "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The essence of this mystery is—1. Christ Himself: God-Man, in which connection we must remember the glorious work He undertook and finished on our behalf; and (2) His offices, prophet, priest, king, friend, brother, head, &c. Whatever Christ is His people are in Him: crucified, dead, risen in Him; in Him we live eternally, and sit in heavenly places. This is the essence of the whole gospel, He who does not preach Christ preaches no gospel. There is no more possibility of a gospel without Christ than a day without the sun or a river without water. 2. Christ Himself and no other. Never be put off with books or conversations. Nothing short of reaching and touching Christ will serve your turn. 3. Christ Himself rather than anything which Christ gives. How different He is from all our other friends and helpers. They bring good things, but Jesus gives us Himself. He does not merely give us wisdom, righteousness, &c., He Himself is made of God all these things to us. When you are ill you are glad to see the doctor, but when you are well you want to get rid of him; but you can never do without Christ. When cured we want to see Jesus more than ever. 4. Christ alone is enough. Some hold a candle to the sun by preaching Christ and man's philosophy or priestcraft. II. THE SWEETNESS of this mystery which is CHRIST in YOU. This is a grand advance. Christ in heaven, Christ free to poor sinners is precious, but Christ in the heart is most precious of

all. A loaf is a good thing, but if we could not get it within us we should die of starvation. A medicine may be a noble cure, but if kept in the phial would do us no good. Christ in you is—1. Christ accepted by faith. It is a wonderful thing that Christ should enter a man, but still more wonderful that He should enter by so narrow an opening as our little faith. There is the sun, yet it can come through the narrowest chink; but we should pull up the blinds, and let him shine in all his glory. Grow in faith, then, and take in Christ more fully. 2. Christ possessed. Nothing is so much a man's own as that which is within him. Men may question whether an acre or a house is yours, but not yesterday's meal. 3. Christ experienced. There may be a valuable medicine, but it is of no efficacy to a man until it is within him. When it commences to purify and strengthen, he knows it without the testimony of others. When Christ is in you curing your sin, and filling your soul with love to holiness, then will you know the Lord. 4. Christ reigning. 5. Christ filling. 6. Christ transfiguring. You thrust a bar of iron into the fire, and keep it there till the fire enters it, it is then like fire itself. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." III. THE OUTLOOK OF ALL THIS IS CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY. 1. Glory. Surely that belongs to God only. Yes, but Christ says, "The glory Thou hast given Me I have given them." 2. How do we know that we are to have glory? (1) Christ makes us glorious now by His coming, which is a pledge of future glory. (2) Christ has entered into covenant with God to bring His people home to glory. (3) The Christ who has come to live with us will never leave us till we are glorified. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Christ in you* :—I. CHRIST IN YOU means Christ embraced by faith as our righteousness and strength. This is the sure ground on which we may hope for glory (Eph. iii. 17). When a sinner's heart is opened to see the excellence of the Saviour, it inwardly embraces Him, and every discovery renews this act of inward cleaving. Then every reproach, temptation, fall, affliction, makes the soul more fully embrace Him (see Gal. iv. 19; John xv. 4, xvii. 23, 26). II. THE EFFECTS OF THIS UNION. 1. The mind of Christ is formed in the soul (1 Cor. ii. 16). The believer thinks as Christ does, and so has the spirit of a sound mind (2 Tim. i. 7). Not, of course, that he has the omniscience and infallible judgment of his Lord, but up to his light he sees as Christ does. (1) Sin to be abominable. (2) The gospel, its glory and completeness. (3) The world and its vanity. (4) Time and its value. (5) Eternity. As did Christ he sees everything in its light. 2. The heart of Christ. (1) There is the same love to God in both. (2) The same aversion to God's frown. (3) The same love to the saints. (4) The same compassion for sinners. (R. M. McCheyne, M.A.) *Christ in you an expanding force* :—When Christ once enters into a soul, by degrees He occupies the whole of it. Did you ever hear the legend of a man whose garden produced nothing else but weeds, till at last he met with a strange foreign flower of singular vitality. The story is that he sowed a handful of this seed in his overgrown garden, and left it to work its own sweet way. He slept and rose, and knew not how the seed was growing till on a day he opened the gate and saw a sight which much astounded him. He knew that the seed would produce a dainty flower and he looked for it; but he had little dreamed that the plant would cover the whole garden. So it was: the flower had exterminated every weed, till as he looked from one end to the other from wall to wall he could see nothing but the fair colours of that rare plant, and smell nothing but its delicious perfume. Christ is that plant of renown. If He be sown in the soil of your soul, He will gradually eat out the roots of all ill weeds and poisonous plants, till over all your nature there shall be Christ in you. God grant we may realize the picture in our own hearts, and then we shall be in paradise. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Christ in you the hope of glory* :—I. THE SUBJECT of the Apostle's declaration. 1. "Glory" refers to the felicity of a future life as discovered by the gospel; "the hope" is that "laid up for us in heaven." Of a life after death the Gentiles knew nothing with certainty, and the Jews only dimly. "Life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel." 2. This glory was one of (1) character, "a glory to be revealed in us"—a personal perfection to adorn the world, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2) Condition and place. It refers to the light and participation of that incomparable splendour which emanates from the throne and pervades the residence of Deity. God is light, and "dwelleth in a light which no man can approach unto." In consistency with this the heavenly mansions are "the inheritance of the saints in light"; all the luminaries of heaven are excluded as unnecessary appendages in consequence of the surpassing splendour derived immediately from God and the Lamb. II. THE MEDIUM of this hope: Christ. He was the author and bestower of it. He had not only revealed the object, and imparted knowledge respecting it,

but had opened the way to its enjoyment. He was "the way, the truth, and the life," and they needed nothing besides. It was inconsistent with His grace and truth, omnipotence, love, and with the perfection of His work on earth, for Him to have recourse to Jewish ceremonies, personal suffering, or philosophic speculations, as a means of augmenting their confidence, or securing their possession of the anticipated eternity. III. THE SENSES IN WHICH CHRIST IS IN US PERSONALLY AND EXPERIMENTALLY. 1. Faith in Christ as the great sacrifice. It is thus that the life is derived that can never perish, and that a union is established with Christ which will lead Him to remember us when He cometh in His kingdom. "I am crucified with Christ," &c. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." 2. The influence of His Spirit who effects that change in our nature which "makes us meet for the inheritance," &c. 3. The habitual remembrance of His laws and the consequent exhibition in affectionate obedience (John xv. 4, 7, 10, 11). Lessons—1. The unspeakable importance and value of religion. 2. How delightful to have such a hope of glory to cling to; an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, among the billows and eddies of that turbulent stream on which we are embarked. (*T. Binney*.) I. GLORY, another word for heaven, setting forth—1. Its excellence. Nothing is esteemed glorious but what is of transcendent worth. The Jews felt this, hence the Hebrew word signifies also weight and substance. So heaven is called "an exceeding weight of glory." 2. Its magnificence. Mere excellence is not glory, to be that it must be known and seen. The sun is not glorious behind a cloud; a diamond must be brought forth and polished to be glorious. So the glory of heaven consists in the discovery of its excellencies—the Father in His majesty, the Son in His grace and love, holiness in its perfection and beauty, &c. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." II. THE HOPE OF GLORY. This brings us down to earth, but still with heaven in our sight. But there is a hope even of heaven not worth the having. We read of a hope that perishes, that shall be cut off like a spider's web and the giving up of the ghost. May that be destroyed, for a false hope is worse than none at all. The true hope is distinguished from this by three marks. 1. It comes down from heaven. We cannot create it; no fellow-creature can persuade us into it. It is the gift of the heavenly Spirit to the renewed heart. It resembles faith and rests on the same foundation, yet it differs from it. "There is a world of glory," says faith. "I am going to it," says hope. 2. It longs and looks for heaven. It is an "earnest expectation" like that of the storm-tossed mariner for the desired haven. 3. It carries the soul on towards heaven and makes meet for it. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself," &c. III. CHRIST. He is connected not with the glory but with the hope, as its foundation. Take Him away and there is no hope. 1. Christ has purchased glory for us. As sinners and rebels we were farther from it than any beggar is from a crown. But He has paid the ransom which delivers us from condemnation, and which entitles us to glory. 2. He has actually taken possession of glory for us. Hence the believer's hope is connected with the ascension—"The anchor of the soul," &c. 3. Christ has pledged Himself to bring believers to glory. IV. CHRIST IN US. What this means is more than we can tell. Picture to yourselves a house, comfortless within, and falling to decay. Let a stranger enter it, he may act in two ways. He may secrete himself in some dark corner, and, watching his opportunity, do much mischief without its inhabitants even knowing he is there. Thus Satan is acting in the hearts of thousands, who little think he is near them, much less within them. But suppose that stranger to be a man of another character, and as soon as he goes in, to throw open the windows, and to let in the air and light. See him then discovering himself to the inhabitants of it. "I am come to live with you," he says, "if you will let me, as your friend and brother. But this filthiness I cannot bear, nor this disorder. I love comfort and cheerfulness." And then he sets about cleansing that house, putting it in order, adorning and repairing it, strengthening its walls and closing up every fissure, so that when the wintry storm beats, no wind or rain can enter it, and nothing shake it. And then while he is doing this, he goes about enlivening it with his presence, and making the voice of joy and praise to be heard from day to day in every room of it. Oh, you would say, what an altered house! What a blessed guest has that man proved in it! Now the Lord Jesus when he enters a sinner's soul acts exactly thus. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Christ in you*:—This strange thing once startled an emperor. Ignatius, who had assumed the name Theophorus to express this gospel truth, stood before him to vindicate his profession of Christianity. "Who is Theophorus?" haughtily asked the heathen monarch. "He who has Christ in his breast," said the martyr.

"Dost thou, then, carry Him, who was crucified, within thee?" Raising his voice with holy animation, while an almost heavenly brightness played upon his pallid countenance, the Christian here replied, "I do—I do; for it is written, 'I dwell in them, and walk in them!'" (*W. H. Luckenbach.*) 1. Glory is the greatest word in our language. It is one of God's most magnificent titles. It is the object of the true believer's hope, and whatever else he relinquishes he will not part with this. He lives and dies in hope. 2. This hope arises from the indwelling of the Saviour. He is in us as the source of life and the principle of action. 3. This union is not essential like that which subsists between the sacred Three; nor is it personal like that between the Divine and human natures of our Lord, nor merely an operative or influential union like that between God and His creatures; but a mystical and spiritual union, a union of affection, interest, and design. It is also mutual and reciprocal. He dwells in us, and we dwell in Him (*John xiv. 23; Gal. ii. 20; Rev. iii. 20*). I. EXPLAIN AND ILLUSTRATE THE TRUTH OF THE TEXT.

1. Christ is revealed in the gospel as the hope of glory. In order that He may be received He must be outwardly proposed by the ministration of the Word (*Rom. x. 14; Rev. i. 2*). By the discovery the gospel makes of Christ's ability and willingness to save, it opens a door of hope to the vilest (*Rom. xv. 4; Col. i. 23; Heb. vi. 18*). 2. Christ crucified is the foundation of our hope, by becoming the meritorious cause of it. 3. Christ is the hope of glory efficiently by the operation of His Spirit in our hearts (*Rom. viii. 9*). Without that any hope of salvation is visionary. 4. Christ dwelling in the heart is the evidence that He is to us the hope of glory, and by no other means can that hope be ascertained. He is our life; but in order to this He must live in us. After all that He has done and is doing for us, there is something continually to be done within (*Rom. x. 6-9*). II. ESTABLISH AND CONFIRM THE LEADING SENTIMENT. 1. Christ being in us is the best evidence of our being in Him, and the testimony of an angel could not make it more satisfactory (*1 John v. 11-12; Eph. i. 3-4; 1 Tim. i. 9*). 2. Christ in us is the nourishment of our hope. "Greater is He that is in you," &c. 3. Christ in us is the pledge and earnest of our hope. To have Christ in us is the life of grace; to be with Christ is the hope of glory; and the two go together. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The hope of glory*:—The late Isaac Pitt was suffering from what appeared to be an attack of rheumatic gout, from which no serious danger was apprehended. His friends were startled by the announcement of the physician, "There is no hope." Another medical man was called for consultation. "Doctor," said the sick man, "I wish to know the very truth; do not conceal anything. Do you think I shall recover?" "We will do all we can, but we fear there is no hope of recovery." "Thank you," he rejoined, "I should like you to do all you can; but if not successful, I have a hope. A ransom has been provided, a Saviour has been sent: I accept the ransom, I believe in the Saviour." When the doctor says there is no hope for the body, this hope of glory is an anchor for the soul. (*New Testament Anecdotes.*) *Christ in the heart*:—David Hume, the great historian of England, and noted enemy of the Christian faith, once overheard his servant-man John repeating the text, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." "You know that's all nonsense," said Hume; "I wonder that a sensible man like you can believe it. If Christ be in heaven, as you say, how can He be in you? He can't be in two places at one time. And then to be 'in you,' I don't understand it." "David Hume," said John, "you wrote the 'History of England,' and I read it page by page with great delight. You say in that history that the one redeeming feature in the life of 'Bloody Mary' was, that when she was dying, the news came to her that Calais had been captured, and that on that occasion she raised herself up in bed, and said to her maids of honour, 'When I die, take out my heart, and you will find "Calais" written on it.' Now, what more Calais written on Mary's heart, than Christ on mine? Take out my heart, and you will find Christ written on it." (*J. L. Nye.*) *Christ in the heart the believer's hope*:—I. CHRIST DWELLS IN BELIEVERS. 1. Christ is in you who truly believe in him. Faith brings Him into union with the soul. 2. Christ is in you as He engages your first affections. 3. Christ is in you as His likeness is impressed on your souls. Where this is there will be—(1) Aversion to sin. (2) Delight in the law of God. (3) Zeal for the Divine glory. (4) Habitual submission to the Divine will. 4. Christ is in you if His Spirit dwell in you—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," &c. II. CHRIST IN BELIEVERS IS THE HOPE OF GLORY. 1. Their hope is founded in Christ (*1 Tim. i. 1*). Nor can the hope of a sinful creature rest anywhere else with safety. 2. Their hope is communicated by Christ. 3. Their hope is maintained by Christ. They cherish this hope as Christ is in them. Learn—1.

The happy condition of the believer. He may rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 2. The importance of earnest endeavours to know our state before God. 3. The fallacy of that hope that is not founded on the Saviour, and productive of conformity to Him. (*Congregational Remembrancer.*) *The Indwelling of Christ:*—There are four methods by which we arrive at the knowledge of Christ. 1. The historical. Without this we cannot become acquainted with the true portraiture of Christ. It is true that one may study the Gospels intellectually, and derive from them a conception of Christ that is truly noble, but which is not vital and powerful: but this is the abuse of a right thing. The study of the work and character of Christ is antecedent and auxiliary to a true experience of Christ. 2. The theological. This is often carried to excess and abused, but none the less there is a place for it. It is a matter of transcendent interest to know whether Christ believed He was Divine. Views of the Divinity of the Saviour which run low will, averaging them through the ages, be productive of a low tone of spirituality and *vice versa*. Nevertheless a man may have a right theology of Christ, and yet not be possessed of Christ. It is auxiliary only. 3. The apostle taught that there was something more than this, viz., a living Christ who may be a part of our lives. I. IN ORDER THAT HE MAY BE MY CHRIST HE MUST BE ONE IN WHOSE HANDS IS THE WHOLE SPHERE IN WHICH I LIVE AND ACT, Lord over all the causes which are influencing me. 1. No man ever contests in himself and strives to release himself from what is low and base, and reaches toward the higher and nobler, if he does not feel the need of God. When we are looking down we are our own gods, but when we strive upwards we feel the necessity of supernal influences. 2. Now as when I hunger, my hunger says there is food, as when my eye was made it said there was light to match it, so I know that certain struggles and yearnings point to something higher. 3. These yearnings are met in Him of whom the previous verses of this chapter point. No man who is limited by specialities, physician, teacher, friend, &c., can give me the help I need. He must be as He is, the embodiment of all power, and Lord over all. 4. But in order to this He must be *mine*, mine as really as if I were the only human being in the universe: not of course to the exclusion of others—but as my father was not less wholly mine because he was my brothers' too. II. IN ORDER TO MEET THE EXIGENCY OF MY NATURE AND EXPERIENCE I MUST HAVE A CHRIST WHO LOVES ME. 1. I cannot live without love; but human love is inadequate. 2. Yet how am I to be loved, and thus live. I can never hope to deserve it. Here the transcendent love of Christ comes in. He loves the loveless, and asks no more but that I let Him love me. 3. The consciousness of this unspeakable love is most potent and inspiring. III. IT IS NECESSARY THAT CHRIST SHOULD BE IN ME, a Being whose love, power, and whole nature and influence I feel within developing in me the superior qualities of the spiritual elements, and giving authority and power to love and hope, and faith and conscience. And there is a direct sympathetic action of the Divine mind on ours. Indeed, we act on each other. If you sigh in the presence of another man, he will sigh; if you laugh, he will smile. And so if the heart be open and the moral nature sensitive, Christ acts upon the thought and feeling so that we are guided by Him. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The Indwelling Saviour:*—There are three features which mark the relationship indicated by the text. I. IT IS AN INTIMATE RELATION. 1. It is not a mere sacramental relation. That may exist and be altogether an external thing, and leave the heart possessed entirely by another than Christ. 2. The relationship between Christ and His people is not exhausted by such images as shepherd, husband, &c., which are external, however intimate. Persons may be near and yet be utter strangers. 3. This relation is internal as the branch is in the vine, than which nothing can be closer. II. AN ENDURING RELATION. All other relations, parent and child, husband and wife, teacher and scholar, are terminable; but this is not affected by the vicissitudes of time. It is everlasting; by faith now, by sight by and by. III. AN INTENSELY PRACTICAL RELATION. 1. There are many relations that are merely nominal and honorary, gratifying to ambition, but conveying no substantial good. It is not so with this. For Christ is in His people. 1. As the ground of their pardon and acceptance. 2. As their best Friend. We turn to a real friend—(1) To counsel us in perplexity. (2) To lessen our sorrow. (3) To heighten our joys. Jesus does all this as the best earthly friend can never do. Conclusion: The subject suggests its proud point of distinction between the man who is a Christian and the man who is not. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The true Christ of Man is*—I. IN THE SOUL. He is not the Christ of the Book and the creed merely. He is in the soul—I. As the chief

object of love. 2. The chief subject of thought. 3. The chief sovereign of activities. II. THE INSPIRER OF THE SUBLIMEST HOPE. This hope is—1. Directed to the highest object, "glory." The glory of goodness, of moral assimilation with God. Hope for goodness is the virtuous hope. 2. Based on the surest foundation—Christ's word and influence. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 23. Whom we preach.—*The Apostolic Ministry.*—I. ITS SUBSTANCE. "Christ." 1. In the dignity of His person (verses 12-19.) 2. Therefore Christ only. Some preach themselves, morality, human systems, philosophy. 3. Christ always. If I come into the pulpit with another theme, concluding I shall have other opportunities, and so compel Him to give place, it may be the last time I shall preach. Christ in you, the hope of glory. This includes two things—(1) Christ, in His intimate relation to the believer. (2) Christ, in all the animating hopes of futurity. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This can counteract the darkness of the future. II. ITS MANNER. 1. Warning. (1) Fidelity demands this. The world must not only be instructed, but admonished. Let us take warning. A few blessings yet remain; but they will soon be gone; let us not trifle with them also. (2) The voice of death urges this upon us. (Read Ezek. xxxiii. 2-9.) 2. Teaching. Here two things are essential. (1) Simplicity. No one can teach who does not make himself understood. There must be ability to communicate. Some lock up their ideas as the miser his wealth, and perishes with it. (2) Diligence also is necessary. We must be "instant in season and out of season." (3) This must be done individually, "teaching every man." Here much care, prudence, and promptitude is required. Let men see how intent we are on their salvation. (4) Wisely also—"In all wisdom," seeking out suitable season to speak to the heart. Various means must be employed, and we must accommodate ourselves to the capacities of those whom we address. III. ITS END. 1. A final presentation. Christ is to present all to the Father, and the minister all to the Son. 2. A personal presentation, *i.e.*, all must stand before Him. 3. A presentation of acceptance; therefore all will not be presented. 4. It is a perfect presentation—"That we may present every man perfect." (1) It is a perfection of knowledge—"What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." (2) It is a perfection in righteousness. (3) As to the perfection of glory, "Eye hath not seen," &c. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." 5. It is a ministerial presentation. The minister must of necessity be a witness as to the reception or rejection of his ministry, and give an account. (*W. B. Collyer, D.D.*) I. THE GREAT SUBJECT OF AN EVANGELICAL MINISTRY. We preach Christ. 1. In the dignity of His person. 2. His deep humiliation. 3. His infinite atonement. 4. His distinct offices as Prophet, Priest, and King. 5. The fulness and sufficiency of His grace for all the purposes of our present, complete, and everlasting salvation. 6. The purity of His character, "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps." 7. As our great Leader to a mighty and glorious victory. 8. As our judge. II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS SUBJECT IS TO BE APPLIED TO THE UNDERSTANDING AND THE CONSCIENCE. 1. Warning every man of the danger of (1) Denying Christ. (2) Substituting anything in the room of Christ. (3) Slighting Christ or neglecting Him in any way. (4) Perverting the grace of Christ or neglecting to improve it. 2. Teaching every man (1) His privilege—to enjoy through Christ remission of sins—to be adopted into God's family—to be sanctified wholly—to obtain a seat at last in the kingdom of God's glory. (2) The way to obtain these privileges—"Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (3) His duty (a) to God, to love, serve, honour, and obey Him, and that until death; (b) to the nation, of which he is a subject, "to fear God and work righteousness," (c) To the world, of which he is a citizen. III. THE GREAT END WHICH A CHRISTIAN MINISTER HAS TO KEEP IN VIEW. That every man may be—1. Perfectly instructed in the doctrines, privileges, and duties of the Christian faith. 2. Perfected in the love of Christ. 3. So as to be presented blameless at the coming of Christ. (*J. Waterhouse.*) I. WHOM A GOSPEL MINISTER SHOULD PREACH. Christ. 1. On the cross. No other sacrifice but His could avail to roll the reproach from a guilty world. There is salvation in none other. 2. In the grave triumphing over death, bringing life and immortality to light, becoming the pledge of our resurrection. 3. On the throne able to save, protect, rule. 4. On the judgment-seat. II. HOW A GOSPEL MINISTER SHOULD PREACH. 1. Warning every man (1) by the threatenings of the Divine law; (2) of his responsibility for religious privileges. 2. Teaching every man—(1) The love of God. (2) The duty of man. III. THE GREAT END OF THIS PREACHING. To present

every man—1. Perfect in the attributes of a renewed and glorified nature. 2. To be secured by union with Christ. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) I. THE NATURE of the Apostolic Ministry—"Preach." 1. Paul was no ritualist. The day for ritualism was gone by. The Christ dimly seen in the world's childhood through the old economy was now fully revealed, and must be presented in a manner suited to the reason and heart of full-grown men. 2. Paul had no philosophy to elaborate; the realities of the gospel had superseded its speculations useful as they once were. 3. Paul was a preacher. He proclaimed war against sinners, peace to the penitent. II. ITS SUBJECT. 1. A personal act, not a sublime legend or poetic myth. 2. Christ as distinguished from every other person. (1) From angelic or saintly mediators. (2) From himself, "We preach not ourselves," etc. 3. Christ as a Person as distinguished from Christianity or any part of it as a thing. Christ, and not merely (1) Christ's example. (2) Christian theology. (3) The sacraments. III. ITS CHARACTERISTIC was to so present Christ that the Master might do His own work in His own way. Hence his ministry was—1. Admonitory. (1) He preached a Saviour. So as to show that the cost and character of His salvation were such as to involve those to whom He was offered in a tremendous responsibility. (2) He preached Christ as the only Saviour, and thus set the issues of accepting or rejecting Him clearly before men. (3) As the Judge. 2. Instructive. Paul teaches every man by (1) Setting forth the Instructor. (2) The Teacher as the education—"That I may know Him." (3) Wise. "In all wisdom." (4) Universal. "Every man." IV. ITS AIM. 1. Christ is the sphere in which Christian perfection is to be attained. 2. In Christ the believer is perfect. 3. Perfect in Christ we are presented for acceptance, consecration, work, warfare, and reward. (*J. W. Burn.*) *The Christian Ministry.* The false teachers had a good deal to say about a higher wisdom reserved for the initiated. They apparently treated the Apostolic teaching as trivial rudiments only fit for the vulgar crowd. They had their initiated class to whom their mysteries were entrusted in whispers. Such absurdities excited Paul's special abhorrence. He had broken with Judaism on the very ground of its exclusiveness. These dreamers were trying to enforce an intellectual exclusiveness quite as opposed to the gospel. So the apostle takes up their phrases—"Mystery," "perfect" or initiated, "wisdom," and presses them into the service of the principle that the most recondite secrets of the gospel were for every man. Our business is to tell out as fully and loudly as we can to all, all the wisdom we have learned. I. THE APOSTLE'S STATEMENT OF HIS WORK. 1. Not a theory or a system, but a living Person. (1) The peculiarity of Christianity is that you cannot take its message and put aside Christ. His Person is inextricably intertwined with His teaching, which centres in Him who is "The Truth." You may separate between Buddha's and Confucius's teaching and themselves, but you cannot do so with Jesus. If we think less of Him than Paul does in this chapter, we shall scarcely feel that He should be the preachers theme; but if He is to us what He was to him, then our own message will be "Behold the Lamb." Let who will preach abstractions, the Christian minister has to preach Christ. (2) To preach Him is to set forth His person, and the facts of His life and death, and to accompany these with that explanation which turns a biography into a gospel. "The gospel which" Paul preached was "how that Christ died." That is biography, and to stop there is not to preach Christ; but add "for our sins," etc., and you preach Christ. (3) A ministry of which Christ is manifestly the centre may sweep a wide circumference, and include many themes. The requirement bars out no province of thought or experience, but demands that all themes should lead up to Christ, and that His name, like some deep tone on an organ, shall be heard sounding on through all the ripple and change of the higher notes. 2. The manner of the Apostle's activity. (1) "We proclaim," tell out fully, clearly, earnestly. We are not muttering mystery-mongers. We cry in the streets to every man. (2) This implies that the speaker has a message, that he is not a speaker of his own words or thoughts, but of what has been told him to tell. 3. This connection of the minister's office. (1) Contrasts with the priestly theory. "We preach," not we sacrifice, work miracles at any altar, or impart grace by any rites, but by the manifestation of the truth discharge our office, and spread the blessings of Christ. (2) Contrasts with the false teacher's style of speech, which finds its parallel in much modern talk. Their business was to argue and refine and speculate. They sat in a lecturer's chair; we stand in a preacher's pulpit. If the Christian minister allows the philosopher in him to overpower the herald, and substitutes his thoughts about the message or his arguments in favour of it for the message itself, he abdicates his office. 4. We

hear many demands to-day for a "higher type of preaching," which I would heartily echo, if only it be preaching, the proclamation of the great facts of Christ's work. But many are trying to play up to the requirements of the age by turning their sermons into dissertations, philosophical, moral, or æsthetic. We need to fall back upon this "Whom we preach," and oppose that to the demands of an age one half of which "require a sign," and would degrade the minister into a priest, and the other calls for "wisdom," and would turn him into a professor. II. THE VARYING METHODS BY WHICH THIS ONE GREAT END IS PURSUED. 1. Warning or admonishing. (1) The teaching of morality is an essential part of preaching Christ. But the moral teaching which is confined to general principles is woefully like repeating platitudes and firing blank cartridges; yet if the preacher goes beyond these toothless generalities, he is met with the cry of "personalities." But there is no preaching Christ completely which does not include plain speaking about plain duties. (2) Nor is such preaching complete without plain warning of the end of sin. People like to have the smooth side of truth always uppermost; but there are no rougher words about what wrong-doers come to than some of Christ's; and he has only given one half of his Master's message who hides or softens "the wages of sin is death." (3) But all this must be connected with and built on Christ. Christian morality has Jesus for its perfect exemplar, His love for its motive, His grace for its power. Nothing is more impotent than mere moral teaching. 2. "Teaching." In the facts of Christ's life and death, as we grow up to understand them, we get to see more and more the key to all things, and the Christian minister's business is to be ever learning and teaching more and more of the manifold wisdom of God. He must seek to present all sides of truth, teaching all wisdom, and so escaping from his own limited mannerisms. The Christian ministry is distinctly educational, and is more than the "simple preaching" which is the "avoidance of mere dogma" or the repetition of "Believe." The New Testament and common sense require more from a teacher. 3. Observe the repetition of "every man," which is Paul's protest against an intellectual aristocracy, and his affirmation that Christianity is for all. III. THE ULTIMATE END OF THESE DIVINE METHODS. 1. Presentation at the Judgment. 2. Perfection. The word may be used in its technical meaning of "initiated," but negatively it implies the entire removal of all defects, and positively the complete possession of all that belongs to human nature as God meant it to be. 3. This completeness is attainable only in Christ, by that vital union with Him brought about by faith, which will pour His Spirit into ours. 4. This is possible for every man. There are no hopeless classes. IV. THE STRUGGLE AND THE STRENGTH WITH WHICH PAUL REACHES TOWARD THIS AIM. 1. He has found that he cannot do his work easily. That great purpose made a slave of him. I not only preach, I toil like a man tugging at an oar, and putting all his might into each stroke. Perhaps there were people who thought the preacher's life an easy one, and so the apostle had to insist that the most exhaustive work is that of heart and brain. The minister who is afraid of putting all his strength into his work, up to the point of weariness, will never do much good. 2. There must be not only toil, but conflict, "striving," contending with hindrances, without and within, which sought to mar his work. 3. Now for the strength. The measure of our power is Christ's power in us. He whose presence makes the struggle necessary, by His presence strengthens us for it. We have not only His presence beside us as an ally, but His grace within us. Let us take courage then for all work and conflict. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christ personally the subject of preaching:*—Suppose that a man has heard of a great physician who understands his complaint. He has travelled a great many miles to see this celebrated doctor; but when he gets to the door they tell him that he is out. "Well," says he, "then I must wait till he is in." "You need not wait," they reply, "his assistant is at home." The suffering man, who has been often disappointed, answers, "I do not care about his assistant, I want to see the man himself: mine is a desperate case, but I have heard that this physician has cured the like; I must, therefore, see him." "Well," say they, "he is out; but there are his books; you can see his books." "Thank you," he says, "I cannot be content with his books; I want the living man, and nothing less. It is to him that I must speak, and from him I will receive instructions." "Do you see that cabinet?" "Yes." "It is full of his medicines." The sick man answers, "I dare say they are very good, but they are of no use to me without the doctor: I want their owner to prescribe for me, or I shall die of my disease." "But see,"

cries one, "here is a person who has been cured by him, a man of great experience, who has been present at many remarkable operations. Go into the inquiry-room with him, and he will tell you all about the mode of cure." The afflicted man answers, "I am much obliged to you, but all your talk only makes me long the more to see the doctor. I came to see *him*, and I am not going to be put off with anything else. I must see the man himself, for myself. He has made my disease a speciality; he knows how to handle my case, and I will stop till I see *him*." Now, if you are seeking Christ, imitate this sick man, or else you will miss the mark altogether. Never be put off with books or conversations. Be not content with Christian people talking to you, or preachers preaching to you, or the Bible being read to you, or prayers being offered for you. Anything short of Jesus will leave you short of salvation. You have to reach Christ, and touch Christ, and nothing short of this will serve your turn. Picture the case of the prodigal son when he went home. Suppose when he reached the house the elder brother had come to meet him. I must make a supposition that the elder brother had made himself amiable; and then I hear him say, "Come in, brother; welcome home!" But I see the returning one stand there with the tears in his eyes, and I hear him lament, "I want to see my father. I must tell *him* that I have sinned and done evil in his sight." An old servant whispers, "Master John, I am glad to see you back. Be happy, for all the servants are rejoiced to hear the sound of your voice. It is true your father will not see you, but he has ordered the fatted calf to be killed for you; and here is the best robe, and a ring, and shoes for your feet, and we are told to put them upon you." All this would not content the poor penitent. I think I hear him cry—"I do not despise anything my father gives me, for I am not worthy to be as his hired servant; but what is all this unless I see *his* face, and know that he forgives me?" We are not content to preach unless Jesus Himself be the theme. We do not set before you something about Christ, nor something that belongs to Christ, nor something procured by Christ, nor somebody that has known Christ, nor some truth which extols Christ; but we preach Christ crucified. We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Ministerial faithfulness*.—You will be interested in hearing the particulars of the final interview between the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV.) and the late Bishop of London (Porteus), which have lately been communicated to me. Among other good people with whom my informant is intimate is Mr. Owen, minister of Fulham, who was in a manner the Bishop's parish clergyman, and long his chaplain. It seems his Royal Highness had sent out a summons for a great military review, which was to take place on a Sunday. The Bishop had been confined to his house, and did not hope, nor, I suppose, wish, ever in this world to go out again. He ordered his carriage, however, upon hearing this, proceeded to Carlton House, and waited upon the Prince, who received him very graciously. He said, "I am come, sir, urged by my regard to you, to your father, and to this great nation, who are anxiously beholding every public action of yours. I am on the verge of time; new prospects open to me; the favour of human beings, or their displeasure, is as nothing to me now. I am come to warn your Royal Highness of the awful consequences of your breaking down the very little that remains of distinction to the day that the Author of all power has hallowed, and set apart for Himself." He went on in pathetic terms to represent the awful responsibility to which the Prince exposed himself, and how much benefit or injury might result to the immortal souls of millions by his consulting or neglecting the revealed will of the King of kings; and, after much tender and awful exhortation, concluded with saying, "You see how your father, greatly your inferior in talent and capacity, has been a blessing to all around him and to the nation at large, because he made it the study and business of his life to exert all his abilities for the good of his people, to study and to do the will of God, and to give an example to the world of a life regulated by the precepts of Christian morality; he has been an object of respect and veneration to the whole world for so doing it. If he has done much, you, with your excellent abilities and pleasing and popular manners, may do much more. It is impossible for you to remain stationary in this awful crisis; you must rise to true glory and renown, and lead millions in the same path by the power of your example, or sink to sudden and perpetual ruin, aggravated by the great numbers whom your fall will draw with you to the same destruction. And now, were I able to rise, or were any one here who would assist me, I should, with the awful feeling of a dying man, give my last blessing to your Royal Highness." The Prince upon this burst into tears, and fell on his knees

before the Bishop, who bestowed upon him, with folded hands, his dying benediction; the Prince then, in the most gracious and affecting manner, assisted him himself to go down, and put him into his carriage. The Bishop went home, never came out again, and died the fifth day after. On hearing of his death, the Prince shut himself up, and was heard by his attendants to sob as under deep affliction. I think I have now given you a brief but faithful account of this transaction as I heard it. (*Memoirs of Mrs. Grant of Laggan.*) *Sinners must be warned:*—John Elias was a Welsh preacher of great power. On one occasion he went to Rhuddlan to preach in the open air on Sunday, during which a fair was held there to sell and buy articles used in the time of harvest. Scythes, sickles, etc., were sold there on that day. Crowds of ungodly people were present. Mr. Elias ascended some steps near a public-house, as a messenger of God to denounce the desecration of His day. His prayer arrested at the commencement the attention of all present. He acknowledged with trembling voice how the people in the fair were bringing God's wrath upon their heads by violating His holy day. The contagion of serious apprehension of danger spread through the throngs in the fair. They hid their sickles and scythes as if the Judge of the world had come to call them to account for their rebellion against Him. Mirth and music were hushed under the power of the dread which ruled all hearts. At the conclusion of his discourse the people quietly but quickly wended their way toward home, glad that a storm of fire and brimstone had not consumed them. *On preaching Christ:*—There was a devoted clergyman of the Church of England, Mr. Mackenzie, of Holloway, London, who used to go down to Wemyss Bay every year for his holiday; and then he would also preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. God laid His hand heavily upon that godly minister, and when he was lying on his death-bed, the saintly Mr. Pennefather, of Midmay, went to see him; and the dying minister looked up at his kind visitor and said, "If God should raise me up from this sick bed, I should not preach the doctrines less, but I should preach the person of Christ more." (*Mr. Wilson.*) *Motives to earnestness:*—We read that the Rev. Charles Simeon kept the picture of Henry Martyn in his study. Move where he would through the apartment, it seemed to keep its eyes upon him, and ever to say to him, "Be earnest, be earnest; don't trifle, don't trifle"; and the good Simeon would gently bow to the speaking picture, and, with a smile, reply, "Yes, I will be in earnest; I will, I will be in earnest; I will not trifle, for souls are perishing, and Jesus is to be glorified." Oh, Christian, look away to Martyn's Master, to Simeon's Saviour, to the omniscient One. Ever realize the inspection of His eye, and hear His voice of tenderest importunity, "Be instant; entreat with all long-suffering and tears. Be faithful unto death; for lo, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me." (*S. J. Moore.*) *An earnest preacher:*—When Dr. Chalmers occupied the chair of philosophy in the College of St. Andrews, he used to gather into his own house each Sabbath evening the poorest and most ignorant of the vagrant children of the neighbourhood; and his biography states that for that audience he prepared himself as carefully, with his pen in his hand, as for his class in the University. So, on a winter day, through frost, and in the face of a driving snow-storm, you might have seen him walking five miles to fulfil an appointment of religious worship with a little company of rustic people at Kilmany—and there, amid some illiterate, shivering cottagers, too few for a church or chapel, met in a damp room—an audience that many men would have thought it expedient to dismiss at once, "on account of the weather," and many more would have put off with some crude, unpremeditated talk—he preached as laboured and as eloquent a sermon as would have moved to rapture and wonder the learning and fashion of Glasgow or of London. It is only of such earnest stuff as this that the truly commanding persons in any of the elevated ranges of action or of learning are made. *Faithfulness reciprocated:*—I was seventeen years old when I went to Boston. On Sunday I went into a Bible-class in one of the churches. I had been there but a few Sundays before that teacher came down into the shoe-store where I was engaged, and put his hand on my shoulder, and spoke to me about my soul. He was the first man that ever spoke to me about my soul. He shed tears. I forget now what he said, but I never will forget the pressure of his hand and those tears. Seventeen years rolled away, and one dark, rainy night I was speaking in Worcester; a young man, after the meeting, came up the aisle and said to me, "I have heard my father speak of you, so after that I thought I would like to become acquainted with you." "Who is your father?" "Edward Kemble." My old teacher! The thought passed across my mind, "Oh, if I could do for his son what he did for

me." I put my hand on his shoulder, and said, "Henry, are you a Christian?" The tears started as he said, "No, sir; but would like to be." Thank God for that! I preached Christ to him; but he could believe all that was in the Bible against sinners, like many others, but not what was for them. . . . Briefly, he believed at last, and comforted his dying mother with the knowledge of this fact. And his sister's conversion followed. (*D. L. Moody.*) *Earnestness in warning men*.—A story is told of a traveller who was journeying in the darkness along a road that led to a deep and rapid river, which, swollen by sudden rains, was chafing and roaring within its precipitous banks. The bridge that crossed the stream had been swept away by the torrent, but he knew it not. A man met him, and after inquiring whither he was bound, said to him in an indifferent way, "Are you aware that the bridge is gone?" "No," was the answer. "Why do you think so?" "Oh, I heard such a report this afternoon, and I think you had better not proceed." Deceived by the hesitating and undecided manner, the traveller pushed onward. Soon another, meeting him, cried out in consternation, "Sir, sir, the bridge is gone." "Oh, yes," replied the wayfarer, "some one told me that story a little distance back; but from the careless tone with which he told it, I am sure it is an idle talk." "Oh, it is true, it is true!" exclaimed the other. "I know the bridge is gone, for I barely escaped being carried away with it myself. Danger is before you, and you must not go on." And in the excitement of his feelings he grasped him by the hands, and besought him not to rush upon manifest destruction. Convinced by the earnest voice, eyes, gesture, the traveller turned back and was saved. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Perfect in Christ Jesus*.—*The exalted aim of the Christian minister*.—In one of the compartments of the London Express the other day, an eminent artist was trying to hurt the feelings of a Baptist minister who was travelling in his company. The artist said, contemptuously, "Preaching is such a very low occupation!" The minister replied, "Pray, sir, will you tell me what is your chief object in life?" The painter said, "Why, of course, my chief object is to make great pictures." The minister observed, "Well, that may be a worthy object; but, in my opinion, the highest aim in life is to make good men. Pictures perish; men are everlasting." "Ah," said the painter, "you are right; the humblest preacher who by example as well as precept inspires goodness in men is much more useful to the world than the most eminent artist." (*W. Birch.*) **I. THE FAITHFUL ARE SAID TO BE PERFECT.** 1. Comparatively with the unconverted. Religion will make a man perfect in comparison of that which by nature men can attain unto. 2. They may be said to be perfect who want nothing that is absolutely necessary for salvation. 3. In righteousness there is perfection, and so they shall be absolutely perfect at the day of judgment, and are already perfect in respect of justification; yea, this word is given to the sanctification of the faithful, and that two ways—(1) As to be perfect notes nothing else but to be a strong man in Christ (Heb. v. ult.). (2) As to be upright is accepted with God for perfection, by the benefit of the covenant of grace and the intercession of Christ. Thus I think the very word is used in these places: 1 Cor. ii. 6, Phil. iii. 15, James i. 17, Heb. vi. 1, 12, 13. Thus there is perfection in doctrine (Heb. vi. 1), in faith (James ii. 22), in hope (1 Peter i. 13), in love (1 John iv. 18 and John xvii. 23), in understanding (1 Cor. xiv. 20). **II. BUT WHO IS A STRONG MAN IN CHRIST OR A PERFECT MAN?** 1. He that can forgive his enemies, and pray for them, and do good to them (Matt. v. 48). 2. He that finishes his work; he doth not begin slightly and work for a spirit, but perseveres (John xvii. 4). 3. He that holds constant amity and holy communion with God's children (1 John iv. 12; John xvii. 23). 4. He that renounces the world, denies himself, and consecrates his life to God (Rom. xii. 12). 5. He that is not carried away with every wind of doctrine, but follows the truth with all constant unmovableness (Eph. iv. 13, 14). 6. He that presseth after perfection (Phil. iii. 13, 14, 15, x. 9). 7. He that hath a plerophory or full assurance of the will of God towards him (Col. iv. 12). 8. He that can digest the stronger doctrines of religion (Heb. v. 14). 9. Patience hath in him her perfect work (James i. 4). 10. He sins not in word (James iii. 12). 11. He keeps the word (1 John ii. 5). 12. He is settled in the love of God, and hath not fear, but boldness (1 John iv. 17, 18). (*N. Byfield.*) *Aim at perfection*.—Aim at perfection in everything, though in most things it is unattainable. They who aim at it and persevere will come much nearer to it than those whose laziness and despondency make them give it up as unattainable. (*Lord Chesterfield.*) *Attaining perfection*.—At present the believer is like the marble in the hands of the sculptor; but though day by day he may give fresh

touches and work the marble into greater emulation of the original, the resemblance will be far from complete until death. Each fresh degree of likeness is a fresh advance towards perfection. It must then be when every feature is moulded into similitude, when all traces of feebleness and depravity are swept away for ever, the statue breathes, and the picture burns with Deity—it must be that then we “shall be filled.” We shall look on the descending Mediator, and, as though the ardent gaze drew down celestial fire, we shall seem instantly to pass through the refiner’s furnace, and leaving behind all the dishonour of the grave, and all the dross of corruptible humanity, spring upward, an ethereal, rapid-glowing thing, Christ’s image extracted by Christ’s lustre. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Growth in perfection*:—The thing which is most perfect, if it be susceptible of growth at all, will have the most sure and rapid growth. Which grows most and in the best manner, the flower which is whole and perfect in its incipient state, or that which has a canker in it, or is otherwise injured in its parts? Which will grow the most rapidly and symmetrically, the child which is perfect in its infancy, or one that is afflicted with some malformation? Facts of this kind make it clear that, although it is possible for a person who is partially holy to grow in holiness, a person who is entirely holy will grow much more. (*T. G. Upham, LL.D.*) *Perfection a life’s work*:—The process of Christian perfection is like that which a portrait goes through under the hand of an artist. When a man is converted, he is but an outline sketch of a character which he is to fill up. He first lays in the dead colouring; then comes the work of laying in the colours; and he goes on day after day, week after week, year after year, blending them and heightening the effect. It is a life’s work; and when he dies, he is still laying in and blending the colours and heightening the effect. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 29. Whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working.—*Work in us and work by us*:—The work of Christ in us and for us does not exempt us from work. Nor does the Holy Spirit’s operation supersede human effort, but rather excites it. This truth is illustrated in—I. THE BELIEVER’S SALVATION. If any man be saved, the work within is entirely wrought by the Holy Ghost, but that does not exempt from, but necessitates, energetic labour. To enforce this we remark—1. That the Christian life is always described as a thing of energy: as a journey, a race, a boxing match. 2. That there is no illustration in Scripture which allows the supposition that heaven is won by sloth. That is everywhere condemned. 3. That it is natural it should be so. When the Holy Spirit comes the sinner sees his danger, and exclaims, “What must I do to be saved?” He sees the excellence of salvation, and is desirous of finding the pearl of great price at all costs. Having found Christ, the believer is moved at once to glorify Him with all his powers. 4. That it is most certain that all saving acts must be performed by the man himself. Faith is the gift of God, but the Holy Ghost never believed for anybody. Repentance is His work, but the sinner must repent. He helps our infirmities in prayer, but we have to pray. 5. That if He were not made active, but one simply called upon, there is a reduction of manhood to materialism. There is no moral good or evil to me in a work which is not my own. In the Square of St. Mark, at Venice, at certain hours the bell of the clock is struck by two bronze figures as large as life, wielding hammers. Now, nobody ever thought of presenting thanks to those bronze men for the diligence with which they have struck the hours; of course, they cannot help it, they are wrought upon by machinery, and they strike the hours from necessity. Some years ago a stranger was upon the top of the tower, and incautiously went too near one of these bronze men; his time was come to strike the hour; he knocked the stranger from the battlement of the tower and killed him; nobody said the bronze man ought to be hanged; nobody ever laid it to his charge at all. There was no moral good or moral evil, because there was no will in the concern. It was not a moral act, because no mind and heart gave consent to it. Am I to believe that grace reduces men to this? 6. I warn any who imagine a man is a merely passive being in salvation against putting their theory into practice. II. THE MINISTRY OF THE SAINTS IN THE CONVERSION OF OTHERS. The Holy Spirit alone can convert a soul, but wherever He works, as a general rule, it is in connection with the earnest efforts of Christian men. This is clear—1. From the example of the text. Paul certifies that the salvation of souls is the sole work of Christ, but he declares that He laboured “agonizing.” Labouring means—(1) Abundant work. No man can be said to labour who only does half a day’s work; and a soul labourer will not

make his work a by-play, but put in long hours, and be ever at it. (2) **Hard work.** He is no labourer who takes a spade to play with it as a little child upon the sand. (3) **Personal work.** No man is a labourer who works through his servants; and the power of the Church lies in the personal influence of her members. (4) All this must have combined with it inward soul conflict. If your heart never breaks for another, you will never be the means of breaking his heart. 2. This is plain from the work itself. (1) Souls are not converted, as a rule, without previous prayer. So we must be stirred up to prayer, and the petitions God hears are not those of people half asleep. (2) Souls are saved instrumentally through teaching, but not cold, dead teaching. Some warn souls in such a careless tone as to create unbelief. (3) Teaching is not all; we must use earnest, persevering persuasion. 3. Earnest zeal is a natural result of the Spirit's working on the soul. (1) He sanctifies in each the natural instinct which leads them to wish others to be like themselves. Having experienced salvation, we desire others to have the same happiness. (2) He bestirs in us the impulse of gratitude to Christ, and so consecration to Him. (3) He sanctifies the desire for the prosperity of the community to which we belong, and so we ardently labour for the success of the Church. 4. The whole history of the Church confirms what has been stated, our Lord's ministry, Pentecost, Chrysostom and Augustine, Luther, &c. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1-4. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you.—Ministerial anxiety:—This anxiety was occasioned by the subtle errors prevalent in Colossæ. Error cannot come into collision with truth without creating confusion of ideas, mental distraction, and moral restlessness. This anxiety was—**I. INTENSE.** The thought of the preceding verse is here expanded. The conflict refers not so much to outward trial, &c., as to his fervent and importunate wrestling with God. The error must have been serious to occasion this struggle; great souls are not affected with trifles. People little know what their pastors pass through. A knowledge of this anxiety, however, is often necessary to create a responsive sympathy, and to teach the people the care they should have for their own salvation. **II. DISINTERESTED.** "As many as have not seen my face"—not only Colossians and Laodiceans. **III. HAD REFERENCE TO THE HIGHEST SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENTS OF BELIEVERS.** Paul was solicitous—1. For the confirmation of their faith, "comforted," i.e., encouraged, confirmed. He knew how error disintegrated the heart's confidence and produced trouble, doubt, perplexity. 2. For their union in love. Without this no solid comfort. Error snaps the bond of love and splits the Church into parties. 3. For their enrichment with the unspeakable wealth of the Divine mystery. (1) This mystery is explained in the unique Person and endowments of Christ. (2) The believer is privileged to attain to a full knowledge of the Divine mystery. (3) This understanding is the true enrichment of the mind. "Unto all riches." This vast store is opposed to the poverty of the mind which has only a few confused unconnected truths about the gospel. "Full assurance" means unclouded perception and firm conviction. This is secured only by diligent study and inner illumination of the Spirit. Every other kind of knowledge is poor and unsatisfying. **IV. PROMPTED THE APOSTLE TO FAITHFULLY WARN THE CHURCH.** Error is seductive. It is needful to keep a vigilant outlook in regard to its enticing words. The most effectual antidote to any heresy is the simple proclamation of the doctrine of Christ. **Lessons**—1. The true minister is anxious to promote the highest good of the people. 2. All truth finds its explanation and error its refutation in Christ, the source of eternal wisdom. 3. False doctrine should be fearlessly and faithfully exposed. (*G. Barlow.*) *Paul's striving for the Colossians:*—The strain of the apostle's agony for the Colossian Church is here continued. Note the consummate art with which he prepares the way for his warnings. **I. THE CONFLICT ITSELF WAS THAT OF THE ARENA, AND "GREAT."** 1. No external conflict can be meant, for he could strike no blows for them; but he could send them ammunition, and this Epistle has been a magazine and arsenal ever since. But the real struggle was in his own

heart. In that lonely prison cell, and with burdens enough of his own, like some soldier left behind to guard the base, his thoughts were in the field. 2. For all Christians, sympathy in the battle of God, which is being waged all over the world, is a plain duty. Whosoever our prison may be, we are bound to take an eager share in the conflict by interest, such help as we can render, and that intercession which may sway the fortunes of the field though the uplifted hands grasp no weapons. The men who bear the brunt of the battle are not the only combatants. In many a quiet home where wives and mothers sit there is an agony as intense as in the battle. It was a law in Israel, "As his part is," &c. (1 Sam. xxx. 24). So all Christians who in heart and sympathy have taken part shall be counted as combatants and crowned as victors. II. THOSE FOR WHOM THE CONFLICT WAS ENDURED. "As many as have not seen," &c. The Colossians might think that he cared less for them than for those communities he had planted or watered. They had never felt the magnetism of his personal presence, and were at a disadvantage from not having had the inspiration and direction of his personal teaching. But Paul shows them that from this very fact they had a warmer place in his heart. He was not so enslaved by sense that his love could not travel beyond the limits of his eyesight. III. THE OBJECT IN VIEW. 1. That their hearts might be comforted. (1) Heart, in Scripture, means thought as well as emotion. (2) Comfort is more than consolation. The cloud that hung over the Church was not about to break in sorrows needing consolation, but in practical errors needing strength to resist. So Paul desires that they may be *encouraged* not to quail, but to fight with good cheer. And what we want is the brave spirit and the serene assurance of victory in our struggles. What have we to do with fear, seeing that One fights by our side who teaches our hands to war? 2. The way to secure this is union in love. (1) Love is the true bond which unites men, and therefore adds to the strength of each. Little faggots bound together are strong. The solitary heart is timid and weak, but many weaknesses brought together make a strength, as shily built houses in a row hold each other up. Loose grains of sand are moved by a breath; compacted they are a rock against which the Atlantic beats in vain. A real moral defence against even intellectual error is found in the compaction of Christian love. A community so interlocked will throw off many evils, as a Roman legion with linked shields roofed itself over against missiles from the walls of a besieged city, or as the imbricated scales of a fish keep it dry. (2) But the love is not merely love to one another, but common love to Christ, the bond of union and true strengthener of men's hearts. 3. This compaction in love will lead to a wealth of certitude in the possession of the truth. It tends to "all riches of the full assurance," &c. (1) In times of religious unsettlement Christian men are tempted to lower their own tone, and to say "It is so" with less certainty, because so many are saying "It is not so." Some are so afraid of being thought narrow that they seek the reputation of liberality by talking as if there were a film of doubt over even the truths "most surely believed." Few things are more needed now than this full assurance: (2) This wealth of conviction is attained by living in the love of God. If we love we shall possess an experience which verifies the truth for us. Rich in the possession of this confirmation of the gospel by the blessings it brings, and which witness to their source as verdant banks do to the stream, we shall have a right to oppose to many a doubt the full assurance born of love; and while others are disputing whether there be any Lord, or living Christ, or forgiveness, or providence, we shall know that they are ours because we have felt the wealth and power they have brought into our lives. 4. This unity of love will lead to full knowledge of the mystery of God. (1) That mystery has its stages. The revelation is finished, but our apprehension of it may grow, and although we shall never outgrow it, reflection and experience will explain and deepen it. Suppose a man could set out from the great planet that moves in the outermost rim of our system, and travel slowly inwards to the great central sun, how the disc would grow, and the light and warmth increase with each million of miles, till what had seemed a point filled the whole sky! (2) The stages are infinite because in Him are all the treasures, &c. These four words are all familiar on the lips of later Gnostics, and were no doubt in the mouths of the false teachers. The apostle would claim for his Gospel all which they falsely claimed for their dreams. (a) All wisdom and knowledge are in Christ. He is the Light of men, and all thought and truth of every sort came from Him who is the Eternal Word. All other media of revelation have but uttered broken syllables. Christ still pursues this work. (b) In Christ, as in a great storehouse, lie all the riches of spiritual wisdom, the massive ingots of solid gold, which when coined into

creeds and doctrines are the wealth of the Church. (c) In Christ these treasures are hidden, but not as the heretic's mysteries from the vulgar crowd, but only from eyes that will not see them; hidden that seeking souls may have the pleasure of seeking, and the rest of finding; hidden as men store provisions in the Arctic regions, in order that the bears may not find them, and shipwrecked sailors may. Conclusion: Such thoughts have a special message for times of agitation. We are surrounded by eager voices proclaiming profounder truths and wisdom than the gospel gives us. In joyful antagonism Christian men have to hold fast by the confidence that all Divine wisdom is laid up in Christ. The new problems of each generation will find their answers in Him. We need not cast aside the truth learned at our mothers' knees; but if we keep true to Christ and strive to widen our minds to the breadth of that great message, it will grow as we gaze, even as the nightly heavens expand to the eye which steadfastly looks into them and reveal violet abysses, sown with sparkling points, each of which is a sun. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

*Three wonderful things:—*1. A NOBLE ANXIETY. Paul pictures here his eagerness as that of the racer and wrestler. So far there is nothing very rare, for the spectacle of anxious men struggling with keenest eagerness to gain some purpose of their own is common. But the elements of nobleness here discovered in Paul are—1. His anxiety for others. He says to the men of Colossæ, "My conflict is for you." It is no self-centred life that Paul lives when he spends himself lavishly for these early churches. 2. His anxiety for the absent. There is a counterfeit coin in current speech, "Out of sight, out of mind." It is a proverb coined in the mint of a very shallow and selfish life. Such a spirit (1) limits power, (2) narrows character. Whilst real care for the absent—(1) Increases the power of the mind. It gets strong enough to wing its pinions over oceans, and even to pierce other worlds. (2) Cultivates spiritual habit. It delivers a man from being the creature of sense. 3. His anxiety for those with whom he had no direct connection. He is caring for a group of churches on the Lycus that he had not even visited. It was pure, disinterested love. Wherein does the modern gospel of altruism excel this gospel Paul believed and practised? and where has altruism the motives with which Christianity pulsates, or the examples that Christianity can cite? II. A BLESSED EXPERIENCE. Analyzing these verses we find signs—1. Of personal comfort. The word "comfort" here, as in the word "Comforter," points to more than solace, it tells of encouragement and strengthening. What better experience could he desire for the members of this young Church than that their hearts should be comforted? But to that is added the blessing of social security. Few expressions can describe a completer unity than this "knit together." It means an interweaving of sympathies, an interlinking of destinies; and this is obtained by the highest and surest method "in love." 3. Of firm conviction, "and all assurance." There is much more than opinion, there is conviction; and conviction of man's noblest faculty, the understanding, which is more than the reason alone. And this supreme conviction is, as to the truth, of the supremest importance, viz., the acknowledgment of the open secret about God. III. AN OPEN SECRET. Paul did not mean by mystery an unknowable, mystical something; but rather a truth once hidden but no longer concealed; a truth fully, freely revealed. The self-revelation of Christ is the revelation of man, of duty, of God, of heaven. In Him were stored away all the riches of truth and love for which men cried. He is the exhaustless storehouse of God's supplies for man's higher nature. He is the vast mine of thought, of sympathy, of grace; and only the industrious who sink the shaft of inquiry, fellowship, faith, will know what the mine contains. (*U. R. Thomas.*)

*The full assurance of knowledge:—*The second Colossian prayer is the sequel of the first (chap. i. 9-14), inasmuch as it shows at once the end of all practical obedience and the ground of all practical knowledge. The words that introduce it show it to be a supplement, and also that the apostle's request now deepens into a "great agony" which is akin to our Lord's. The matter of his supplication is expressed in the form of the end which its answer would obtain, the full assurance of their understanding of Christ, the mystery of God. 1. How THIS IS TO BE OBTAINED. 1. It is hardly possible to separate the "full assurance" from the process by which it is reached. It is a branch, together with the "knitting together in love" of the one common trunk, "the comfort of the heart." This last root principle of all religious establishment is the full work of the Paraclete, and the "heart" is the inner man in which the Spirit carries on His renewing work. Hence from this common principle spring two developments—one of charity, the other of knowledge—and these are united. The love of God strong in the heart of

each, the bond of perfectness, is as "brotherly love," the bond of union in which all are edified. Thus while carnal knowledge "puffeth up," and makes a hollow fellowship, love "buildeth up" both the individual and the community. They have the riches of the knowledge of God imparted to them in the radiations of Divine light through the Word, by the Spirit. These riches are the common heritage of the sacred Treasury; but every one's individual knowledge is His own.

2. This "full assurance" is the clear, deep, unclouded confidence in the reality of the objects of knowledge which the understanding grasps, excluding hesitation and fortifying against error. This grace comes from the "comfort" of the Spirit, through the diligent study of the mystery hid in Christ. St. Paul speaks of three kinds of assurance. (1) The full assurance of faith—the deeply wrought conviction of the reality, and the possession of the present object. (2) The assurance of hope—the full conviction of the reality of its objects as our own in reservation. (3) The full assurance of understanding is more general in its object, including all the truths of the common salvation, of the unity, harmony, and practical consequences of which the understanding is fully assured. So far as the individual truths of this knowledge are embraced for salvation, the soul exerts its faith in full assurance; so far as they belong to the future, its hope; but so far as they are independent of present and future, and are the possession of the mind and not of the experience, the soul delivers them to the care of the understanding.

II. WHAT IT IS IN ITSELF. The mystery of God which is Christ. This being the precise sentence which St. Paul wrote, we are taught by him that the Person of Christ, God-man, is the central and all-comprehending mystery.

1. The secret as it has been expounded in the previous chapter is impenetrable to human intellect. It is the mystery of God, and He alone can understand it. 2. But it is shown forth in such a manner that we may have a full and distinct knowledge, for this is the word, not acknowledgment. There is a difference between penetrating a mystery and beholding and knowing it. In the richness of its full assurance the understanding collects all the elements that go to the conception of the Divine-human Person, and unites them in one supreme object of knowledge, certitude, assurance. 3. Yet this object contains all other objects. In this are hid "all the treasures," &c. To the riches of full assurance correspond the riches of the truths of which it is assured. All other intellectual treasures are of phenomena and time, and must pass away. If the vast fabric of things be destroyed or reconstructed, all extant physical science becomes obsolete. But the knowledge of Christ is always becoming richer. As the individual grows daily in it, so also does the Church behold more and more the development of "the manifold wisdom of God" in Christ.

III. WHAT IT EFFECTS. The apostle's reason for the prayer was his deep desire to defend the Colossians against "oppositions of science," &c. The full assurance of understanding in the mystery of Christ would be their effectual safeguard. The mind once raised to this region of cloudless certitude would not easily be seduced to descend into the region of scepticism, where doubt chases doubt in never-ceasing restlessness of caprice. Gnosticism under other names is still darkening the counsel of the hypostatic union. Hence the necessity of this prayer to-day. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*)

St. Paul's conflict.—As gardeners are not satisfied with sowing good seed, but also take care to eradicate weeds, so in spiritual husbandry it is not enough to cast the Word into souls; the soil must be cleansed of the pernicious weeds of error sown privily by an enemy's hand, or the Divine tillage will be marred. Hence St. Paul in chap. i, having established the truth, now defends it against heresy, and these verses are the entrance to the controversy.

I. THE CONFLICT. What the apostle affirmed at the close of chap. i. he here particularizes. He means—1. The solicitude which the consideration of the Churches drew upon him. For though their faith and constancy afforded him satisfaction, the temptations around them and their human weakness led to the apprehension that they might be drawn from piety. Love is never without this, but the apostle's was so great that he felt as though he had suffered their afflictions himself (2 Cor. xi. 29, cf. also verse 3).

2. But more, he comprises here all that he did to avert the danger. (1) He was perpetually in prayer for them (2 Thess. i. ii; Phil. i. 4; Col. i. 9). (2) To prayer he added action, and as he assails the enemy, he smartly appeals to the faithful, admonishing and encouraging them to needful firmness. (3) The combat, however, did not terminate here. He often came to blows, cheerfully suffering persecution. His very chain and prison were part of his conflict, and hence he told them (chap. i. 24) he suffered for them; because in effect it was for maintaining the liberty of the Gentiles that he was suffering. 3. Admire the zeal and lov

this holy man. He stood, as we may say, on the scaffold, yet their danger troubled him more than his own, and neither prison nor death was able to diminish his affection, or make him lay aside the least of his cares. 4. Observe his prudence. To dispose their hearts and gain authority for his remonstrances, he sets before them his solitudes for their salvation. 5. The apostle's conflict is exemplary. Let ministers learn what they owe to their flocks. Without this strife we cannot avoid the censure of the Supreme Pastor. II. *ITS DESIGN.* Paul fought to secure to them a treasure and to prevent the enemy snatching it away. Therefore he shows that they were in danger of losing it. It consisted of—1. Comfort of heart which heresy necessarily disturbs, because it shakes the truth and certainty of the evangelical doctrine on which it is founded. This should make us jealous for the purity of the gospel. Food, however wholesome, will kill if mingled with poison. 2. Union in love. Their seducers troubled that by sowing the seeds of doctrinal division. This union is necessary to comfort, for what joy can there be in the trouble of division? 3. The abounding of a full assurance of understanding. The order here is to be noted. These three things are of such a nature that the first depends upon the second, and the second upon the third. (1) The knowledge of a Christian should be understanding, i.e., he should see in the clearness of heavenly light the verities which God has revealed, not that we are bound to comprehend them, which would be impossible; but we are to know them as far as they are revealed. Here we see how far a blind faith is from the knowledge of a believer. Paul would have the faithful intelligent. (2) "All riches of understanding." Abundance of knowledge, so that we may be ignorant of none of the mysteries of Divine truth. If we do not, how shall we distinguish the voice of the shepherd from that of a stranger? (3) "Assurance." Though matters of faith are not laid open to the senses or reason, yet the truth of them is so evident, that as soon as the clouds of passion and prejudice are dispersed by the Spirit it shines into our hearts and makes itself to be believed. Thus must it be known with certainty and not with doubting (Eph. iv. 14). Whereby you see how false is the opinion of Rome, which makes the belief of Christianity to depend on the testimony of her prelates. 4. The apostle confines the Christian's understanding within the bounds of its true subject—the mystery of—(1) The Father, because He is the author of the gospel, and has manifested Himself through it. (2) Of Christ, for He has brought this doctrine from the bosom of the Father and set it in our view; and He is the principal subject of it, without whose teaching and merit we can have no true happiness. Conclusion: 1. Paul's desire teaches us our duty. 2. Urge not the vain excuse that you are not ministers, and therefore do not need extensive knowledge. The Colossians were no more ministers than you. We are all engaged in the same war, and privates need arms as much as officers. (*J. Daillé.*) *Soul prosperity* :—I. *ITS DESIGN.* "That their hearts might be comforted." There may be pleasure in which mirth is frolicsome and laughter mad; a thrill of lone delight may sweep across the soul beneath some grand or peaceful scene. There may be brief and dangerous rapture in some wild moment; but no heart was ever comforted amidst scenes like these, either in possession or memory. The word has a hearty English sound about it, and embodies all the unutterable meanings that lie hidden in that word "home." The leading idea is that of quiet after tempests, a present of peace after a past of trouble. And so no heart can be comforted in Christ which has not agonized in penitence. The great calm comes to the soul after the storm raised by the convincing Spirit, when it finds the atonement sufficient and the Saviour willing. It must spring from faith. II. *ITS CONSEQUENTS.* 1. "Being knit together in love." (1) The word applies to the fitting of the parts of a house in harmony. Modern architecture delights in the symmetry of buildings, different parts are arranged to be mutually strengthening without external aid. (2) So the heart in love is to be knit together, the strongest and surest of bonds. It is the root of all other graces, the ground on which the temple is to rise; "rooted and grounded in love." It is the bracelet that clasps the other graces, at once a protection and decoration. "Above all put on charity." It is the mark of the Divine relationship, indwelling, image. (3) The necessity of this to comfort is obvious. Without it hope will be a transient emotion, labour an intolerable drudgery, God alienated, the Church rent. 2. "Unto all riches," &c. (1) The possession of an assured faith, the importance of an intellectual perception of the truth, and of a decisive grasp of its great principles, is often urged by Paul; and Christ prayed that Peter's faith might not fail amidst the sittings of Satan. Do not our own hearts witness to the necessity of this? There is comfort in trust

but none in suspicion and misgiving. (2) Mark the wealthy repetition of the apostle's words. When Solomon speaks of understanding he can scarcely find imagery sufficiently brilliant to set its value forth. The apostle is not satisfied that that only shall be the believer's dowry; there is not only understanding, but "assurance"—knowledge deepening into conviction; "full," no doubt hungering upon the Spirit, the truth so thoroughly appreciated that the principle becomes enbodied with man's nature, a belonging of his, his riches which no panic can scatter and no thief steal. (3) The tendency of the present age is to leave old beliefs behind, and it is considered a proof of manliness to have outgrown the faith of our childhood, which yet was the faith upon which the sturdy manhood of our fathers grew. But surely it were a weary world if in this nineteenth century there is nothing settled. Life is all too short to be spent in dreams. Men die while we are battling with problems. And in all doubt there is discomfort, danger, and death. To the sincere and candid Christianity offers her evidences and all her "riches of the full assurance," &c. Press forward, you shall know if you follow on to know the Lord. 3. There must be testimony if the heart is "knit together in love," &c. (1) It is not to be kept within like a concealed treasure, but it is to be "acknowledged." The duty of confession is parallel with that of faith, and if faith be hid it will die. (2) The "mystery" is to be acknowledged. The greatest triumph of faith is when proud reason bows, the rebel will submits, and the awed senses fear as they enter into the cloud. This is the mystery of God in Christ. Do not let us do the Saviour the dishonour of denying Him either by the lie of speech or the lie of silence. Bold witness-bearing will be found to be a solid comfort to the soul. 4. In regard to this mystery the apostle's words are cumulative, and each has a distinct significance. (1) "Of God." How much of mystery is here! Yet what a comfort! How sad it would be to sit down in a world like ours without a God, with chance as our creator and circumstances our governor; or with gods like those of heathenism. But while the atheist cannot find a God, and the deist denies His existence, and the pantheist reduces Him to an abstraction, the Christian rejoices to believe that there is around him God, living, acting, personal. (2) "Of the Father," a greater mystery. He who is omnipotent, &c., maintains a relationship analogous to that of human fatherhood only, of infinite power and tenderness. What a comfort is this mystery! We live not under a despot's tyranny, but a Father's smile; this makes duty light, and sorrow bearable. (3) "Of Christ." The mystery deepens as we travel on. This makes God "Immanuel." God's own Son stoops to take on Himself a curse that none but Omnipotence could inflict, and none but Omnipotence bear. But vast as is the mystery the comfort is vaster. Heaven and earth reconciled; salvation for the most abandoned. (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) That their hearts might be comforted.—*The triple fruit of evangelical doctrine*.—The apostle contends that they should persist in this. I. THAT THEIR HEARTS MIGHT BE COMFORTED. Perseverance in Christian doctrine brings true comfort. 1. Because salvation by Christ alone brings tranquillity to the troubled conscience. For as the modulations of harmony are applied to arouse the mind when sorrowful, so the promises of God in Christ bring peace to men's hearts (Rom. v. 1; 2 Thess. ii. 16; Phil. ii. 1). 2. Because the doctrine of innovators harassed men's minds with scruples and anxieties. To be exempt from these is a great part of spiritual consolation. II. BEING KNIT TOGETHER IN LOVE as carpenters fit together two pieces of wood, so that they adhere in indissoluble union. This concord of minds is—1. A fruit, because the intellect is the leader of the will (Acts iv. 32). Unity of faith is the firmest bond of unity of mind. Love is the fruit of unanimity of faith which so binds the minds of the godly, that though some light offences intervene, yet as the boughs of the same tree, driven asunder by the wind, immediately come together again because fixed in one root, so with the minds of the faithful, because still rooted in the same faith. 2. A condition without which spiritual comfort is not obtained. For comfort is not had out of Christ; if any one lives without love, he is without Christ, and *vice versâ*. III. UNTO ALL RICHES OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING. 1. The faith of Christians is augmented in richness when they who have learned only the principles and elements proceed to farther attainments. For as in other sciences the principles are few, but contain innumerable conclusions, so here some few necessary principles are presented to tender minds, and afterwards a rich treasury of sacred knowledge is collected for every purpose of salvation by meditation, hearing, and chiefly the internal operation and teaching of the Spirit. They therefore who persevere in the doctrine of the gospel thence obtain all riches. Hence—(1) The laity should not be content with an elementary

knowledge in religious matters (Heb. vi. 1). (2) When these riches are sought, the means necessary to their attainment should be sought. He who would have treasure must dig. 2. Full assurance denotes that firm and certain adherence to what is believed which springs from the internal operation of the Spirit illuminating the intellect, inclining the will, and firmly stamping the impress of the things believed on the mind itself. This is at length attained by those who remain firm in the doctrine of faith. For as trees newly planted are swayed by the wind, so the early faith of the godly wavers with many doubts; but the same trees in course of time fix their roots deeper, so faith shoots its roots deeper into the mind, and at length, by grace, acquires that steadiness which cannot be overthrown (Eph. iv. 14). Hence we learn—(1) That the faith of a Christian ought not to depend on others, but be settled by the efficacy of the Spirit, so that if ecclesiastics, or the whole world even, should depart from the faith, yet every one of the laity should hold to it (Gal. i. 9). (2) How Romanists err who think that the assurance of our faith lies in the breast of the Pope. That cannot give full assurance to my heart, but the operation of the Spirit can and does (1 John ii. 27). (3) That their complaint is unjust who aver that we cannot arrive at this assurance since there are so many sects and controversies. We attain truth not by disputing, but from Him who alone can both know and teach. 3. The understanding fully assured (Eph. i. 17; 1 Pet. ii. 9). Hence that is not a Divine, but animal faith, which has no comprehension of the things believed. Such a faith Staphylus extols in the collier who professed that he believed what the Church believed, and the Church believed what he held, whilst he was ignorant all the time what either the Church or himself held. 4. To the acknowledgment, &c. (1) Under the word "mystery" the apostle includes the whole doctrine of the gospel which is so called, because human reason of itself would never have found the way of salvation but for it. (*Bishop Davenant.*) **Knit together in love.**—*Christian unity*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. There are two kinds of Christian unity. (1) Among all believers there exists a vital union. By our faith in Christ we are united to Him and to each other as members of our body connected with the living head. This union exists in spite of all diversities of character and creed. The uniting power is faith. Without that we are dead, and death means separation. (2) But the text speaks of another union, or it is a superfluity. The Colossians were already partakers of the union common to all Christians. Now the apostle prays that they may be knit together in love. This is not a doctrinal union; desirable as that may be, it is only a union of head. Nor is it an ecclesiastical union; desirable as that may be, it is yet mechanical and external. This is eternal, spiritual, vital. 2. The word is translated compacted (Eph. iv. 16), proving (Acts ix. 22), assuredly gathering (Acts xvi. 10), and means to make to come together. The Colossians were not so compacted as the apostle wished them to be. Seducers had disturbed their fraternal concord. So the apostle prays that their affections may intertwine and interlace; or that as a broken joint when reset knits itself to the other members of the body, so the members of the body of believers might be united to one another, love being the uniting power. 3. Each Church should be a confederated body, so consolidated into one as to be invincible in conflict with the powers of evil. 4. We can have this unity without dull uniformity. There is unity in the Godhead, yet not uniformity; unity among the angels, but they have degrees of power and dignity; diversity among the stars, yet they are all related to the central sun. This unity does not destroy our individuality or our right of private judgment. The Church's vesture may have divers colours, but it must be without seam. Individual members may resemble the rainbow which combines the seven prismatic colours into one glorious arch, or like the ocean in its unfettered flow, "distinct as the billows, but one as the sea." II. ITS NECESSITY. 1. Being destitute of this unity, no body of Christians can answer the end of its existence. It is only where brethren dwell together in unity that the Lord commands His blessing. 2. This unity is essential to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It is only when believers are "built together" that they are a fit "habitation of God through the Spirit." Not before the temple was compacted did "the glory of the Lord fill the house." When "they were all of one accord in one place," there came the blessings of Pentecost. 3. It is only when united that a Church is powerful for good. Separate the particles of a ponderous hammer, and each atom will fall harmless as a snow-flake; but welded into one, and wielded by the arm of the quarryman, it will split granite. Let the waters of Niagara be divided into separate drops, and they are no more than a Scotch mist. 4. Without it a Christian Church may any day be

scattered. It is but a heap of sand the separate particles of which may be separated by a gust of wind. 5. It is necessary to Christian comfort. We are so constituted as to be dependent on each other. To preserve a frigid isolation is to create misery.

III. THE POWER WHICH SECURES IT. Love, without which no real union is possible. The universe has no equal force to that of love. We may think alike on doctrines, polity, and methods of work, but unless our hearts are full of love to Christ and one another we are not united. This power is to be obtained at the Cross, the birthplace of Christian love. (*W. Williams.*) All riches of the full assurance of understanding.—I. THE THINGS OF WHICH WE SHOULD BE ASSURED. 1. The things done by Christ (Luke i. 1). 2. The knowledge of our liberty in things indifferent. 3. The persuasion of the truth of their ministries to whom we subject our souls (2 Tim. iv. 5, 17). 4. The doctrine of the religion we profess. 5. The hope of a better life (Heb. vi. 12). 6. Faith in God's favour upon the warrant of God's Word and Spirit. II. THE SIGNS OF FULL ASSURANCE. 1. It will receive the Word in affliction with much joy (1 Thess. i. 6). 1. It will not be carried about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. iv. 14). 3. It is industrious in the duties of love to God's children (Heb. vi. 11, 12). 4. It is unrebukable, and full of integrity of life. It cannot stand with any presumptuous sin (Heb. x. 22). 5. It will give glory to God against all sense and reason (Rom. iv. 20). 6. It mortifies and extinguishes all headstrong affections (Isa. xi. 7, 9). 7. It is carried with full sails into holy duties, and is faithful in good works. 8. It is able to admonish (Rom. xv. 14). III. THE RICHES OF FULL ASSURANCE. 1. Our spiritual riches lie—(1) In the Word of Christ dwelling in us (chap. iii. 16). (2) In the Spirit of Christ (Tit. iii. 6). (3) In works of mercy and liberality (Eph. ii. 4; 2 Cor. viii. 1, ix. 11). (4) In sufferings and patience. (5) In prayer (Rom. x. 11). (6) In good works. (1 Tim. vi. 18). (7) In utterance and all holy knowledge (1 Cor. i. 5). (8) In our faith (James ii. 5). 2. Worthily is full assurance called riches, for it does all that riches can do to men. It comforts the heart and defends from dangers much better than outward riches. It gains the godly truer reputation than houses, lands, or money. It abounds more to mercy and well-doing with more sufficiency than outward riches, and buys for the soul all necessities. It settles the heart against all changes, makes a man stand against the rage of tyrants and death itself; yea, it prevails with God, and, knowing Him fully, does not fail to trust Him fully in spite of mysterious providences. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." It brings a man the certain pardon of all his offences, and settles his heart in his religion better than ten thousand arguments and volumes of controversies. Conclusion: 1. This full assurance may be had in this life (1 Thess. i. 5; Heb. vi. 11, x. 22; Rom. iv. 21). 2. Therefore we are bound to labour for it. (*N. Byfield.*) The full assurance of understanding.—I. THE KNOWLEDGE OF UNDERSTANDING TO WHICH ASSURANCE BELONGS. 1. Men have two kinds of knowledge respecting Divine things—the one of the intellect alone, which is the fruit of study, just as the natural sciences are; the other a higher knowledge built upon the former, or the former transfigured. It baptizes the understanding with feeling, and the feeling with Divine influences. It is the product of love and obedience more than of inquiry, and is rather the gift of God than the acquisition of man. 2. But although distinguished these are not to be separated. We can possess the lower without the higher, but not the higher without the lower. Intellectual knowledge of the things of God is right as far as it goes. Its objects are true and its apprehension of them is correct. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing implies an understanding of what is heard. This is the window which admits into the soul the light of heaven; and as the room is lighter if the window be large and clear, so also the spiritual knowledge is likely to be more vivid if the natural knowledge of God's things be abundant. The function of the one is to build the altar, arrange the wood, and plan the sacrifice; the function of the other is to bring the fire from heaven. 3. But this is insufficient, and the super-excellence of spiritual knowledge makes it appear pale and poor in comparison. It is superficial. It does not penetrate down to the heart and will, but lies on the surface of the mind; nor does it pierce beyond the outward aspect of God's truth, and is not in communion with its glory. 4. Look at the texts which explain the nature of the higher knowledge. (1) 1 Cor. viii. 1-3. Its fundamental element is love; love comprehending what the most cultured intellect without love cannot receive. The knowledge which is not grounded in love does not build up, but only puffs up. (2) Col. i. 9, 10. Its nature is spiritual because its source is supernatural, and concerns itself with the highest aspects of God's truth which are hid from the natural man.

It is a power which rules the whole man and results in a walk pleasing to God. The highest degree of it, therefore, constitutes the perfection of the religious life. (3) Philip. i. 9-11. Here again the chief element is love. II. THE ASSURANCE BELONGING TO THIS KNOWLEDGE. 1. The assurance is not a property added to the knowledge, but the cream of the knowledge itself, and the higher and more extensive the knowledge the stronger the assurance. 2. Some Christians have an assurance which to some extent is the result of study (Luke i. 4; 1 Pet. iii. 15). This is not possessed by all the saints. They are not able to impart this assured knowledge concerning things in which they have been but imperfectly instructed. But they have assurance of the greatest personal value. Reasons may be circulated, but not intuitions and experiences. My neighbour must see with his own eyes and feel with his own heart what I see and feel in order to partake of the same assurance. It is a revelation on the one side and an intuition on the other. (*J. Hughes, D.D.*) There is no wealth for man's soul like the spiritual consciousness of the glory of the truth of God. I. BY IT EVERY PART OF OUR INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL NATURE IS ENRICHED. 1. It gives light to the mind, such a light as only comes from the Sun of Righteousness, dissipating darkness, clearing away doubts, solving perplexities that nothing else can remove, so that the man illuminated by it becomes a child of light and of the day. 2. It gives peace to the conscience, even the peace passing all understanding which the world can neither give nor take away. 3. It sheds abroad in the heart that love which is its true life, the love of God and Christ to man. 4. It gives purity to the life and nobleness to the character, bringing it under the influence of heavenly motives and the Divine operation, so that the man is transformed into the image of God from glory to glory. 5. It gives glory to manhood, making it a partaker of the Divine nature, and enriching it with the prospect of the unfading crown and eternal blessedness. II. THESE RICHES CAN NEVER PERISH. Other riches may take to themselves wings and fly away, or otherwise disappoint, but the wealth which the gospel gives forms part of ourselves for evermore. Disease cannot affect it; death cannot invalidate its worth; the cares of time and the trials of life only tend to enhance its value and brighten its possession to the soul. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.—*The hidden treasures of wisdom in Christ*:—Wisdom does not consist in wide and varied knowledge. A student may be a walking encyclopædia, and yet be far from being a wise man. Wisdom is the practical application of knowledge, the attainment of the highest moral results by the best means. The cry of the human intellect in all ages is for wisdom. The greatest souls have toiled for it and failed. It is a Divine revelation. The world by wisdom knew not God. The wisdom which all need is found only in Christ. Observe—I. THAT CHRIST IS THE INEXHAUSTIBLE SOURCE OF THE TRUEST WISDOM. The false teachers at Colossæ, like certain pretentious philosophers of modern times, boasted of the vast range of their wisdom and knowledge. They discussed questions which are reproduced to-day—the wisdom of this world which comes to naught. But it is only in Christ that we find all the treasures which furnish and enrich the mind and guide in the way of salvation. If we classify the principal sources of human knowledge, only in Christ does each department find its fullest explication and derive its worth. 1. He is the loftiest ideal and purest inspiration of the poet. Poetry occupies an important place in human culture. It has been abused, but the true poet pants after the noblest expression of the beautiful and the good. Of this, Christ is the embodiment, and the poet exhausts all his resources in portraying the lineaments of His character. 2. He is the grandest hero of the historian. History would be an unsolvable enigma could the name of Christ be struck out. The story of redemption unites Christ with the destiny of man in all ages. 3. He is prominent among the sublimest themes of the philosopher. A philosophy that does not recognize the Divine plunges its votaries in labyrinthine darkness. Its legitimate office is to conduct to God. II. THAT THE TREASURES OF DIVINE WISDOM ARE DISCOVERABLE BY THE SINCERE AND EARNEST SEEKER. They are hid, but not so as to be beyond our reach. They are intended for discovery and appropriation. Their brilliancy sparkles even in their hiding-place. They are like a mine whose riches, though faintly indicated on the surface, are concealed in the depths. The more diligently the mine is worked the more precious and abundant the ore appears. Lessons—1. Man universally covets wisdom. 2. The highest wisdom is treasured up in Christ for man. 3. If man finds it not, it is his own fault. (*G. Barlow.*) *The boundless wealth of wisdom in Christ*:—"Where shall wisdom be found?" &c. (*Job xxviii. 12-20*). These sublime words have been echoed by the inquiring spirits

of every age; but the only true reply is in the text. There are modern forms of old Colossian error: those who say that there is no reliable truth but in the facts of nature; no religion but in science; no progress but in rejecting revelation. I. IN CHRIST ARE HID ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. 1. They are deposited in Him as the God-man, the image of the invisible God, &c. 2. Knowledge is simply enlightenment, acquaintance with truth; wisdom is the use and result of that enlightenment, the application of the truth. Knowledge is the study, wisdom its fruit. 3. Treasures suggest great value and excellence. All the treasures are in Christ; not select truths, but all kinds of truth. As all things were made and consist by Christ, so all branches of knowledge for the human soul have a relation to Him and find their truest meaning in Him. 1. Jesus Christ is the key to human history. (1) The history of ancient nations cannot be considered thoroughly apart from the Jews, with whom they were brought into contact, and every one sees that the Hebrews had relations with Jesus, clear, manifold, and vital. Their ancient records, too, bear constant reference to One, the light of whose promised and expected advent flashed back on Egypt, Assyria, &c., making every page of this history instinct with living interest. (2) The same holds good in regard to modern nations. The unbeliever may reject Christ, still he has to account for the presence of His religion and to explain its influence as by far the mightiest moral impulse which men or nations have received. The pathway of Christ's name and influence is easily traced among the nations in the lines of light and liberty. 2. Christ is the ground of all true philosophy. (1) Nature is hung with all the insignia of Divine skill, power, and glory. Yet experience proves that the light of nature cannot make this impression an abiding principle of action. It is only when we see the material world as the theatre of redemption, and the work of creation the work of the Reconciler, that nature leads up to nature's God. (2) The philosophy of mind likewise finds its meaning in Christ. How is it possible to estimate the value of the soul without a knowledge of Him whose death was the price of its redemption? Philosophy teaches something of the prerogatives of reason, of the power of conscience, and of the relation of the animal to the spiritual nature: but what do we find? The harmony of this lofty nature disturbed, its liberty gone, the prerogative of reason overborne by the power of passion. Where is the light or wisdom that can secure the harmony between what man is and what he ought to be? Where is the knowledge or power that can bring beauty out of the chaos which religion discovers? It is in Christ alone: in Him are hid all the treasures of the only wisdom which expounds the lofty relations of man's mental being and the value and vigour of his spirit. (3) The philosophy of morals in the relation of man to man, and to society at large, is a perplexing study. We see virtue oppressed and vice triumphant, might supreme over right, &c. The solution is in the gospel. In the knowledge of Christ we see the rule of a "righteous Father"—the triumph of law and of love, the harmony of righteousness and peace, and the evidence that whatever anomalies may appear in society now, all will yet be explained and rectified, and issue in the glory of God and the good of man. 3. Christ is the substance of a true theology. (1) All saving knowledge of God and our relations to Him we find in Christ. (2) The peace with God which men have sought everywhere by sacrifice and prayer is secured by Him who is the propitiation for our sins. (3) The future, which has baffled all human inquiries, has been revealed by Him who has brought life and immortality to light. II. THE RELATION OF CHRIST GENERALLY TO ALL HUMAN STUDIES. 1. In Him the mind finds its truest stimulus and healthiest impulse. He is the fosterer and guide of all wise intellectual pursuits. It is in countries where He is known and worshipped that literature and science exercise their widest sway. He emancipates the mind from the bondage of corruption and fear, and as the wisdom of God hallows all wisdom. (1) If we investigate nature, does it make no difference whether we examine a world without God, or a world which God has made the object of His special interest? (2) If we study the human mind, will it make no difference whether we view it as a taper to be extinguished or the offspring of an infinite Father? (3) If we examine the human frame, will it make no difference whether we consider it as destined to rot in the grave, or as the tabernacle of the immortal spirit destined to be restored? Who does not see that the light which Christ brings enhances and elevates every branch of knowledge? 2. The word "hid" implies that wisdom and knowledge are stored up in Him in a hidden manner, suggesting—(1) Concealment. All these treasures are not seen at once by the bodily or spiritual eye. They are hid from the thoughtless and unbelieving world, from the vain and unassisted

intellect (1 Cor. ii. 8). God has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Just as many with an uneducated eye traverse a country rich in mineral wealth, and have no idea of what lies under the surface, so the treasures that are hid in Christ are only seen by the eye of faith, and found by the devout and contrite soul taught by the Spirit of God. (2) But these treasures thus hid are intended for discovery and appropriation. They are gradually unfolded. The number of those enriched daily increases, yet the riches are still inexhaustible, and the oldest disciples are ever discovering some new vein of preciousness in their Lord. So it will ever be. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Earthly and heavenly riches*.—"This morning," says Mr. Fuller, "I have read another of Edwards' sermons, on 'God, the Christian's Portion,' from Psa. lxxiii. 25. The latter part comes very close, and I feel myself at a loss what to judge as to God's being my chief good. He asks, whether we had rather live in this world rich and without God, or poor and with Him? Perhaps I should not be so much at a loss to decide this question as another; namely, had I rather be rich in this world and enjoy but little of God, or poor and enjoy much of God? I am confident the practice of great numbers of professing Christians declares that they prefer the former; and in some instances I feel guilty of the same thing." *The treasures of Christ in relation to education*.—When the apostle spoke of the wisdom hid in Christ, he meant by "wisdom" just what his adversaries meant, that is, the knowledge of man in those sublime relations that connect him with God and God's universal plan. Now this is a sort of knowledge to which everything may be expected to contribute some remote and faint light; but the point here to be observed is, that the revelation of Christ Jesus, alone and unaided, flashes a beam of splendour upon it in which all others are lost and disappear. Nor this only, but as all knowledge is mainly valuable as it helps our efforts for this last and mightiest knowledge of ourselves and God, so when this is attained, through virtue of the Christian truth, it, in its turn, radiates back upon all the departments of knowledge a new and blessed light. And thus the revelation of Christ not merely teaches us in itself a series of truths of inexpressible importance, and without it wholly unattainable, but it also, as a great central discovery, harmonizes all our beliefs, sacred and secular, binds them together as its own servants, gives them a new interest, and position, and colouring, and dignifies the pursuit of them as a labour in the very cause of God Himself,—begun and prosecuted with a view to His glory—for to know the beauty of the temple is to know the glory of the architect. And hence, so far are we who advocate the revelation of Christ as the basis of education, from (as our slanderers have it) restricting or dreading the free search of natural knowledge, that, on the contrary, when once the corner-stone has been fixed in our foundation, we exult in a science and a philosophy that is subservient to the faith of Christ; we hail every bright discovery as a new tribute to the creating and redeeming God whom we adore. Let but the Sun of Righteousness reign in the centre of the soul, and we know that every element of inferior knowledge will dispose itself to revolve harmoniously around it! (*W. Archer Butler, M.A.*) **This I say lest any man should beguile you.**—As men love and desire only those things which have an appearance of good, so they believe only those which have a semblance of truth. This advantage which truth naturally has over falsehood compels its enemies to counterfeit its mask and wear its livery, as coiners give their copper or lead the colour of gold or silver in order to pass it as current coin; otherwise neither error nor base coin have a chance of acceptance. And as Christianity comprises the most important truths, so there never was a system which impostors have so laboured to corrupt; and so, therefore, ought we to strenuously endeavour to sever the falsehood which has been palmed off as the truth. This is one of the most important duties of our lives. It is loss to take bad money for good; it is hurtful to receive an error for truth in the simplest matters; but here the consequence of imposture is irreparable. So here and elsewhere the apostle warns the faithful against it (Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Thess. v. 21; Eph. iv. 14; Heb. v. 14).

I. THE DANGER OF THE COLOSSIANS of being deceived with enticing words. There never was a servant of Christ who was not beset by such a temptation. As soon as Satan sees the truth of the gospel appear he raises up impostors to corrupt it, and to alienate its professors from its purity. 1. The term employed means to deceive by false and ensnaring ratiocination. These bad men, knowing that we are not induced to embrace anything without some reason, our nature demanding that the understanding should precede the will, begin there to effect our ruin. It is a sophism, a false arguing which by its vain appearance and fallacious blaze leads men into error,

as those fatuous fires which, rising at night, conduct those who follow them over precipices. Satan, the father of all sophisters, took this course first, attacking our first parents' understandings in the first place, and beguiling them that he might destroy them. All whom he has since employed have followed the same method. No heretic ever appeared who did not paint over his impostures with specious reasons. Some act maliciously, and in defiance of their own consciences; others through ignorance (Rom. x. 2), like most of those of the Roman communion. But we must take heed of both. As poison fails not to kill the man who takes it, though given in ignorance; so error, from whatever hand it come, has a bad effect. 2. The means which false teachers use are "enticing words" (Rom. xvi. 18; 1 Cor. ii. 4). Under this term are comprehended all that attractiveness of discourse which is apt to touch and win hearts. Eloquence too often makes things, as it were by enchantment, appear quite opposite—honey wormwood, black white, and *vice versâ*. It can subvert a cause, however good; and establish it, however bad. It has frequently procured condemnation for the innocent, while the guilty have been acquitted with applause. But among all the busy people who use it none more perniciously employ it than corrupters of religion. Not that eloquence is to be decried. It has done good service to the gospel, and Paul, who here condemns it as a vehicle of error, does not reject it in the service of the truth. But as innocence is not always the best clothed, so truth frequently is not the most richly decked. II. THE MEANS OF GUARDING AGAINST IT. "This I say"—what? "In Him are hid all the treasures," &c. None of the wiles of error can stand before these. Whoever has this principle in his heart will receive nothing out of Christ, and so has his ears effectually closed against the seductions of error. (*J. Daillé*.) *The true safeguard against error*:—Paul fortifies the disciples by exalting the master and urging the inexhaustible significance of His Person and message. To learn the full meaning and preciousness of Christ is to be armed against error. The positive truth concerning Him, by pre-occupying mind and heart, guards beforehand against the most specious teachings. If you fill the coffer with gold, nobody will want, and there will be no room for pinchbeck. A living grasp of Christ will keep us from being swept away by the current of prevailing popular opinion, which is always much more likely to be wrong than right, and is sure to be exaggerated and onesided at the best. A personal consciousness of His power and sweetness will give an instinctive repugnance to teaching that would lower His dignity and debase His work. If He be the centre and anchorage of all our thoughts, we shall not be tempted to go elsewhere in search of the treasures of wisdom. He who has found the one pearl of great price needs no more to go seeking goodly pearls, but only day by day more completely to lose self, and give up all else, that he may win more and more of Christ his all. If we keep our hearts and minds in communion with our Lord, and have experience of His preciousness, that will preserve us from many a snare, will give us a wisdom beyond much logic, will solve for us many of the questions most hotly debated to-day, and will show us that many more are unimportant and uninteresting to us. And even if we should be led to wrong conclusions on some matters, "if we drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt" us. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Satan's method*:—"This is the devil's device, first to maze people, as birds are with a light and a bell in the night, and then to drive them into the net. If you would keep to wholesome doctrine, keep to a form of wholesome words, and do not place religion in conceited speaking." Would that this advice of Manton's were heeded. We have those about us who are for ever inventing some new thing, and using the old orthodox terms in an altogether novel sense. Their hearers are first dazzled with the clever candle light, and cannot make out what the novel brilliance means; and when they are thoroughly bewildered, a great noise and tinkling is made of pretended wisdom and deep thought, so that the poor souls are ready to fly anywhere and anyhow. Thus the fowler's business is effectually done, and by this means, if it were possible, they would ensnare the very elect. The safest way for simple souls is to keep to a definite and decided gospel ministry. (*C. H. Spurgeon*.) *Error is insidious*:—Error is insidious in its approaches. It flatters by liberality and betrays by sophism. We are not reconciled to it at once. There are disgusts to be allayed and fears to be vanquished. Little by little are we allured. The voyager enters a current which seems propitious, there is no apparent diversion from his course, his bark speeds well, his oar does not toil nor his sail strain. In his confidence all promises success. But while he examines, scarcely does it seem that he has advanced. Much again and again reminds him of what he has noticed just before. A strange familiarity im-

presses his sense. Still current flows into current, while onward and buoyant is his track. Soon he feels an unnatural vibration. Where he glided, he now whirls along. The truth seizes upon him. He is sweeping a whirlpool. Long since he has entered the verge of a maelstrom, and he is now the sport of its gyrations. No power is left his helm or mast; he is the trembling unresisting prey. He hears the roar; he is drawn into the suck of the vortex. Not only the circle lessens, the very surface slopes. The central funnel and abyss, darkheaving, smooth, vitreous, yawns. The mariner shrieks, the skiff is swallowed up, where the waters only separate to close, where the outermost attraction was but the minister to the famine of this devouring maw. (*Dr. R. W. Hamilton.*)

Ver. 5. Though I be absent in the flesh.—I. **THE MODE OF THE APOSTLE'S AFFECTION** towards the Colossians. 1. He shows that he was never so far away from them but in mind, care, and thought he was with them. This was necessary lest they should think he was ignorant of them and indifferent to them, never having visited them. It is the peculiarity of the lover not to be severed in mind from those whom he loves, although separated by space. 2. He rejoiced at what he beheld in them, and expressed himself thus, lest they should suppose he doubted their constancy since he so earnestly exhorted them to perseverance (*Phil. iv. 1*). 3. Hence we infer that—(1) A minister ought to be always present with his flock—if not in body, by care and thought and prayer. (2) A minister's true joy arises from the fact that his people continue and increase in spiritual blessings, not that he himself is enriched in temporals. (3) The state which occasions his joy should cause his solicitude; for Paul in consequence of his joy at their state, labours the more earnestly lest they be cast down by impostors. II. **THE CAUSE OF THE APOSTLE'S AFFECTION.** Note that his praise is most skilful and a strong inducement to perseverance in the thing praised. He who praises what you do declares—(1) That it is good, for otherwise it would not be fit to be praised. (2) That it is easy to you, because you have so long effected it. (3) That it would be disgraceful if you desist, because praise earned is never lost without shame. The apostle rejoiced because of—1. Their order, which denotes—(1) The settled manners of the individuals. Goodness of manners is constantly included in "order" in the scriptures, just as, on the contrary, they who are of bad manners are said to walk disorderly (*2 Thess. iii. 6*). (2) The well-appointed discipline of the Church; which teaches ministers to rule well, subjects to obey duly; and compels the negligent and refractory to perform their duty (*1 Cor. xiv. 40*; *1 Tim. i. 3*). (3) Their agreement and concord. "Order" is a military term, and denotes a compact body of soldiers marshalled in due order. He intimates, therefore, that he regarded them as a well-arranged phalanx, cleaving together in the unity of the faith, and therefore invincible. 2. Their steadfastness of faith in Christ, which denotes—(1) That they suffered not the true doctrine to be wrested from them, but remained firm and unmoveable in it like soldiers at their post. (2) That they did not permit strange doctrines to mingle with it; but filled their minds with sacred truth, the inventions of men being excluded from the business of faith. For that is properly said to be solid which is full of itself alone. 3. Hence we learn—(1) when the mind wavers and vacillates between various opinions, that is not a steadfast faith, but an empty shadow of it. It is the will of God, therefore that our assent to the cause of religion be without hesitation. A faith suspended between conflicting opinions is reproved (*1 Kings xviii. 11*). (2) That faith also which together with the gospel admits the traditions and inventions of men is not steadfast but hollow. (*Bp. Davenant.*) **Phases of human nature.**—I. A POWER THAT IS COMMON TO MAN AS MAN. "Though I be absent . . . spirit." Here is a power of going forth from the body—visiting distant scenes and taking an interest in them. This power we are always using. Our minds are ever away somewhere—they move with lightning rapidity across oceans, continents, and even worlds; they span the ages in a moment. We thank God for this power. Brutes have it not; it makes us independent of time and space, and gives to life an eternal freshness and an infinite variety. II. A SPIRITUAL CONDITION PECULIAR TO SOME MEN. 1. Spiritual order—harmony with ourselves, the universe, God. 2. Stability. Steadfastness to Christ, settled in hope, confidence. What a blessed state! how devoutly to be desired! III. A SOCIAL DELIGHT EXPERIENCED BY CHRISTLY MEN. "Joying," &c. Though Paul's body was in Rome, his spirit was in Colossæ rejoicing in the happiness of the Christians there. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **The separation of friends.**—I. THE CONDITION ANTICIPATED—"Though I be absent in the body." 1. Whatever may be

the number and importance of our relations to our fellows, we are unable to be personally in contact with them in every place. Mercifully we are not permitted to be ubiquitous, and are only suffered to be migratory for self-preservation. This restriction promotes the order, improvement, and happiness of society. 2. But is not it a hindrance to the discharge of our relationships to be absent from them? No, or it would not be made the rule for us by an all-wise God. Observe how it is made the law of Providence in regard to our nearest relations: "A man shall leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife." In how many business necessities absence in the flesh. 3. God would teach us by this law—(1) The temporary nature of existing relations in the flesh, so that we are warned not to regard such as our highest ties. Father and mother, husband and wife, are sweet bonds; but the fact that so many circumstances cause absence, and that death will soon close such relations, ought to lead us to seek other and more enduring relations in the spirit. "Who is my mother," said Jesus. "He that doeth the will of God," &c. (2) The duty of improving our relationships while yet present. Did we realize the law of absence would not a greater spirit of kindness, forbearance, and service be excited? (3) Not to look to the arm of flesh, but to God. The tendency to make much of the human instrument because he is present is natural to man. Christ declared His absence in the flesh to be expedient for His disciples. Who can doubt that one design of Christ in the changes of spheres appointed to His ministers, *e.g.*, is to elevate His Church's faith and to excite them to rely on His Spirit. (4) The cultivation of Christian love in its highest exercise. The love exercised when present has to be purified from inferior motives by absence. Absence from his country purifies the fires of a patriot's love. So instead of loving the Colossians less, Paul loved them the more. II. THE COMMUNION MAINTAINED. Happily we are so constituted that the law which compels our fleshly separations is abundantly compensated by the liberty of the spirit. Paul was with the Colossians in spirit, praying for them wherever he might be, and meeting them around a common mercy seat. (*G. R. Birch.*) *Apostolic praise of order and stability*:—The apostle commended—I. THE EXTERNAL ORDER OF THE CHURCH—"Beholding your order." This is mentioned first because it first meets the eye, though all external discipline must spring from faith. II. THE APOSTLE CHERISHED A DEEP, PERSONAL INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE. 1. In spirit He was present with them. 2. While the Church preserves its order and stability it is invulnerable. 3. It is cause of rejoicing when the Church faithfully maintains the conquests already won. (*G. Barlow.*) *Order and steadfastness*:—The apostle looked forth from Rome with that spiritual second sight to which distance is as nothing. He surveyed churches remote in space, the Colossian among the rest. In praising its condition, he uses an image derived from the order and solidity of the soldiers of the Prætorian guard, whom he saw so constantly during his captivity (Phil. i. 13; Eph. vi. 11; Phil. iv. 7). "Order" properly consists in the due disposition of parts in reference to the whole; steadfastness" lit. "what is made firm;" hence sometimes the solidified body, the solid strength of an army (1 Maccabees ix. 143; x. 50). The first is the orderly organization, without which strength evaporates; the second solid strength, without which order is a hollow parade. The Church's proper organic form and solid definite conviction of the unalterable elements of the Christian creed are closely connected in the apostle's mind as they have been in the history of the Church. The Colossian Church presents itself to him as an army—as to the Church's form, in serried order; as to the Church's creed, solid at the core. (*Bp. Alexander.*) *A lofty Church ideal*. I. OUTWARDLY, AN ORDERLY DISCIPLINED ARMY. 1. Paul was no martinet, anxious about the pedantry of the parade ground, but he knew the need of organization and drill—a place for every man and every man in his place. Order does not merely mean obedience to authority. There may be equal order under widely different forms of polity. The legionaries were drawn up in close ranks, the light-armed skirmishers more loosely. In the one case the phalanx was more, and the individual less; in the other, more play was given to the single man; but the difference between them was not that of order and disorder, but that of two systems, each organized but on different principles, and for different purposes. 2. Some Churches give more weight to the principle of authority; others to that of individuality; but the former has no right to reproach the other as necessarily defective in order. Some Churches are all drill; the Churches of looser organization are in danger of making too little of organization. But both need that all their members should be more penetrated with the sense of unity, and should fill each his place in the work of the body. The proportion of idlers in all Churches is a scandal and

a weakness. However officered a Church may be, no joy would fill an apostle's heart in beholding it, if the mass of its members had no share in its activities. Every society of professed Christians should be like a man-of-war's crew, each of whom knows the exact inch where he has to stand when the whistle sounds, and the precise thing he has to do in gun drill. II. INWARDLY, A STEADFAST FAITH. 1. Perfection of discipline is not enough. That may stiffen into routine if there be not something deeper. We want life even more than order. The soldiers who set David on the throne were "men that could keep rank, they were not of a double heart"—discipline and whole-hearted enthusiasm. Both are needed. If there be not courage and devotion, there is nothing worth disciplining. The Church that has the most complete order and not also steadfastness of faith will be like the German armies, all pipe-clay and drill, which ran like hares before the ragged levies which the French revolution flung across the border. 2. If the rendering "steadfastness" be adopted, the phrase will mean "firmness which characterizes your faith." But some propose "foundation," that which is made steadfast, in which case the meaning will either be "the firm foundation (for your lives) which consists of your faith," or, "the firm foundation which your faith has." Paul rejoices, seeing that their faith towards Christ has a basis unshaken by assaults. 3. Such a rock foundation and consequent steadfastness must faith have, if it is to be worthy of the name, and to manifest its true power. A tremulous faith may be a true faith, but the very idea of faith implies solid assurance and fixed confidence. It should not be like a card castle that the light breath of a scornful laugh will throw down, but "a tower of strength that stands foursquare to all the winds that blow." We should seek to make it so, nor let the fluctuations of our hearts cause it to fluctuate. And that we may do so we must keep up a true and close communion with Jesus Christ. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The faith and order of the gospel recommended.* I. THE ORDER OF A GOSPEL CHURCH. It was the constant custom of the apostles to organize their converts into Churches (Acts xv. 36, 41). The order may be considered in relation to the whole Church as a body (1 Cor. xiv. 40; Titus i. 5), and to its members in their personal behaviour (2 Thess. iii. 6, 11). Both of these will be taken in if we consider the order of a Church of Christ. 1. With respect to its constitution. (1) New Testament Churches consist of such Christians as meet together in a given place for religious worship and discipline. The word Church signifies (a) the catholic invisible Church which consists of all the elect united to Christ their head (Eph. i. 23; v. 25): (b) the universal visible Church or kingdom of Christ; (c) a Christian family all of which are professed believers joining together in the worship of God (Col. iv. 15; Rom. xvi. 3, 5, 10, 15). (d) But the most common sense is that of particular Churches founded for the celebration of sacred ordinances. Hence we read of the Church at Corinth, at Rome, &c. (2) These Churches consist of professing believers who, in the judgment of charity, are real saints (Col. i. 2; Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2, &c.) (3) These professing believers are formed into a Church state, by mutual agreement, for walking together in all the ordinances of Christ according to the will of God (Matt. xviii. 15-20; 2 Cor. viii. 5; Acts ii. 41, 42, 46; 2 Cor. ix. 13). 2. With respect to its officers. It cannot be completed without these who are necessary for the regular administration. These are—1. Bishops or Elders (Phil. i. 1; Acts xx. 28), whose office is to feed the flock (Acts xx. 17; Jer. iii. 15), to rule well and labour in word and doctrine (1 Tim. v. 17). (2) Deacons, who have care of the secular affairs of the Church (Acts vi.) 3. With respect to its worship. A particular Church is the seat of all ordinances, and when it is furnished with proper officers it is in due order for the celebration of them. Churches ought to join in the ordinances of general communion, whether they have a pastor or not (Acts xii. 5; Matt. xviii. 19-20). But preaching, blessing in the name of the Lord, and the administration of the sacraments are a proper province of the pastor, with the agreement of the Church as to time and place. As ministers are not to be lords over God's heritage (1 Pet. v. 3; 2 Cor. i. 24), so neither they nor the people are to call any man master (Matt. xxiii. 8-10). 4. As to its discipline (Matt. xviii. 17; 2 Cor. ii. 6-8). As any society has the right of including and excluding members, so has the Church. And as for government, Acts xv. shows that even when apostles were presiding the Church had a right of being consulted. 5. With respect to the purity of its manners, and the behaviour of its members towards one another and their pastor. They are saints and should be holy; they are brethren and should be kind and helpful; they are under their pastors (Heb. xiii. 17) and should encourage, strengthen, and submit to them. II. THE STEADFASTNESS OF THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST

1. Christ is the object of their faith. 2. Faith is the doctrine (Gal. i. 23; Phil. i. 27; Jude 3) and the grace of faith. Both are probably meant here (see vers. 7, 8, and ver. 6). 3. Steadfastness signifies—(1) The substantial solidity of their faith in opposition to flashy notions and corrupt mixtures (1 Cor. ii. 5, and vers. 4, 7, 8). (2) Its strength in opposition to weakness (Rom. iv. 18, 21). (3) Its constancy in opposition to wavering (Heb. vi. 19; Eph. iv. 14, 15; Col. i. 23; Heb. x. 39). (4) A holy resolution or courage, in opposition to shyness or cowardice in their profession of it (Col. i. 4; Rom. i. 8; 1 Thess. i. 8; Heb. x. 23). III. THE JOY THAT ATTENDS THE BEHOLDING OF THESE. 1. On the part of pastor, people, and other Churches. 2. Because thereby Christ is honoured, the Church edified, religion recommended, the faith confirmed, and other believers encouraged. (*J. Guyse, D.D.*) *The value of steadfast faith:*—Faith is the standard-bearer in every spiritual conflict; and if the standard-bearer fall, then it is an evil day. If faith fails, everything fails: courage fails, patience fails, hope fails, love fails, joy fails. Faith is the root-grace; and if this be not in order, then the leafage of the soul, which shows itself in the form of other graces, will soon begin to wither. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 6, 7. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk ye in Him. —*Christian activity the safeguard of the Church:*—This letter was written under opposite feelings—feelings that never seem absent from the apostle—the most intense faith in the gospel and the most intense fear for it. No shadow of doubt crossed his mind that it was God's gospel, and that the whole power of God went with it; and yet he was filled with fear for it and its success in the world. This seems a strange contradiction, but it was no difficulty of St. Paul's day, it is the difficulty of all times. We believe in the gospel, and yet we are constantly seeking to preserve it. Why? We are afraid for the gospel not because it is not Divine, but because it is. The world may be trusted to provide for its own. Its products grow naturally, as weeds grow. But the Divine gift comes from another clime, and because it will not thrive without care and culture we fear. It is because it is the ark of God we carry that we tremble as we put our hands to it. The ark will never perish, but the hands that bear it may falter, and for a time let it fall into the hands of its enemies. The Church shall never perish, but there is no promise that the living branch shall not be scathed by unbelief or godlessness. Because of the preciousness of the treasure we hold in earthen vessels, we rejoice and tremble as we receive it in trust from God. As we send out new missionaries, and as the faith of Christ passes into new receptacles, we think of how the faith shall be preserved. We know of the Divine Word which is a light to our path, and the creeds and sacraments; but our text speaks of another safeguard. If the Colossians were to be rooted and built up and preserved from the corruptions of the world, philosophy, and vain deceits, it was not to be by the possession of the Word, creeds, and sacraments, but in addition by walking in Christ as they had received Him. Activity in Christian life and work serves to defend and preserve the faith. I. Because IT IS PERPETUALLY PROVING IT. Christianity is a science, the knowledge of God; but it is an applied science, and the application of the science of the knowledge of God is walking with God. Astronomy is a science; navigation is astronomy applied to practice. Every time the sailor unfolds his map at sea, and is enabled to mark the very spot where his ship is, he has a fresh proof that astronomy is true. There is many a captain who carries his vessel into port who is quite sure that his nautical tables are true, who cannot astronomically prove them; but he has practical proofs, and the oftener he avails himself of that, the surer he is. 1. So it is with our faith. The Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, are mysterious things; but we prove them as we find this to be true, that the faith which makes us know Him makes us know ourselves, and brings us into a nearer, living, and deeper communion with Him. 2. Prayer is a mystery. Who can prove to us how and why it is answered? But who knows that prayer is answered? He who has gone down upon his knees and has risen with new light and strength. So walk in Christ, so carry and work the mysteries of faith into your life, and then you will have continued proofs of the truth of your faith. II. Because USE IS A MEANS OF SAFETY. That which we possess, however precious, we are more likely to lose if we lock it up than if we use it daily. It may be stolen long before we get to know it. But what we constantly use we miss directly it is gone. So with the Christian faith. It is those portions that we live by and in, that as we daily use them it becomes impossible to lose. But let there be any part of your creed that is not

woven into daily life, and the adversary may be stealing it before you wist. **III.** Because it TENDS TO THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SOUL. If the mystery of the faith is to be held in a pure conscience, then as the conscience grows purer will be the surer grasp of the mystery of faith. It is in the light of the single eye that God's truth reveals itself. If the treasure be held in earthen vessels, then it depends upon the purity of the vessel whether its contents be preserved in sweetness. And among purifying methods activity is one of the most effective. An article in constant use often keeps itself clean. (*Bishop Magee.*) *The Christian life*.—**I. THE GREAT BLESSING.** "Ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord." 1. Acceptance of Christ. A voluntary act. 2. Possession of Christ. Having received Him He is ours, and we share all His acts. (1) Christ died; we die with Him (Gal. ii. 20), and so are free from the penalty of sin in the eyes of the law. (2) Christ was buried (ver. 12) and we with Him, and so became dead to our former life (Rom. vi. 4). (3) Christ rose, and we rise with Him into newness of life (ver. 13). (4) Christ is at the right hand of God, and we ascend with Him into the honours and safety of the heavenly life (chap. iii. 1-3). **II. THE URGENT DUTY.** 1. Walk, implying—(1) Progress, not only motion. There may be motion in the sap of a plant, but the plant is fixed; and in a ball struck by a bat, but that is forced, not voluntary; but a walk implies personal activity. So in the Christian walk. (a) We must not stay at the starting-point. (b) We must not loiter, "Forgetting the things behind," (c) We must not walk as in a circle, "laying again the foundation of repentance," &c. (2) Change of scene. In a walk our eyes are ever dwelling on something fresh. So we must ever be finding something new in Christ. (3) Our walk is to be "in Him." He is to be seen in us. Others are to know our Master by our life. 2. Rooted in Him. (1) The root gives stability to the tree. Those trees are most stable whose roots take the largest and deepest hold. (2) The life of a tree depends upon its rootedness; uproot it and you destroy it. So we die if not rooted in Christ our Life. 3. Built up in Him. (1) Constant additions. (2) Growing solidity. (3) Ultimate perfection. (4) Exhibition of the Architect's skill, patience, and power. 4. Established in the faith. We must have Christ in us or we shall be overthrown. We are not to be a vane turning at every breath of wind, nor a plant taking such slight hold that some stronger blast will overthrow; but like an oak or a house on a rock, so established that no power can move. This is necessary in view of the various influences to which Christian life is exposed. **III. THE STRONG MOTIVE.** 1. The obligation—"As." Having received Christ we are bound to walk in Him. 2. The appeal—"Ye." Think of what you were and what Christ has made you. Show your gratitude by walking in Him. (*J. Gill.*) *Suggestive features of the Christian life*.—**I. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BEGINS IN A PERSONAL RECEPTION OF CHRIST.** "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord." Religion is the receiving of a Divine gift. It is the growth and development of the supernatural in man. Christ is received—1. As the Christ. The Colossian heresy aimed at subverting the true idea of the Anointed One, commissioned by the Father to effect the reconciliation of the world to Himself; it interposed a series of angelic mediators. To receive the Son of God effectually is to receive Him in all that He claimed to be, and to do, as the Divine, specially-anointed Son, who is the only mediator between man and God. It is of unspeakable importance to catch the true idea of the character and office of Christ at the beginning of the Christian life. 2. As Jesus the Lord. Our reception of Christ does not place us beyond the reach of law, but creates in us the capacity for rendering an intelligent and cheerful obedience. 3. By an act of faith. To receive Christ is to believe in Him. **II. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS GOVERNED BY THE LAW OF CHRIST.** To walk in Christ implies—1. A recognition of Him in all things. In everything that constitutes our daily life—business, home, society, friendships, pleasures, cares, &c., we may trace the presence of Christ and recognize His rule. 2. A complete consecration to Him. 3. A continual approximation to the highest life in Him. **III. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS SUPPORTED AND ESTABLISHED BY FAITH IN FULLY DECLARED TRUTH.** **IV. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE HAS ITS MOST APPROPRIATE OUTFLOW IN THANKSGIVING.** This is the end of all human conduct. Thanksgiving should be expressed in every word and appear in every action. (*G. Barlow.*) *The threefold growth*.—**I. THE CHRISTIAN'S DOWNWARD GROWTH.** "Rooted in Him." All of strength and fruitfulness there is in us depends on the depth with which we strike down into the life and love of God. Measuring and grasping the love of God, Paul begins downward. "Rooted and grounded." We can only reach loftily upward, and broadly outward, as we strike deeply downward. For as

the height of a tree is generally in proportion to its depth, the outreaching of its branches according to the down-striking of its roots, so a Christian cannot fail of attaining to a lofty life, if only he can first attain to a lowly life. We can see at a glance how much depends on this being rooted in Christ. 1. Our fruitfulness. A fruitfulness that continues in spite of surrounding drought, and barrenness, and death—how shall it be maintained? I recently witnessed the effects of long continued drought. The growing corn stood parched and earless. The reason is not simply the long absence of rain in summer, but also the superabundance of rain in spring—that on this account the roots of the corn and wheat ran along on the surface without striking down into the bottom soil. The plants had such prosperous rains in spring that they made no provision for a dry time by going down into the rich depths. 2. Our strength. You have seen the oak smitten by the whirlwind, and how with its giant arms it has caught the tempest in its embrace, and hurled it back, defeated, while itself stood firm and unmoved in its rooted strength. It is pitiful to see a godless man trying to be steadfast in affliction. He has no hidden hold on God by faith and prayer; he has not been sinking his faith deeper and deeper into the heart of Christ as the years rolled on. And now, when the shock comes, he has nothing to hold him. His friends try to prop him up with prudential maxims. But props can never take the place of roots. 3. Purity. "Consider the lily how it grows." It is in the stream, but not of it. Down deep into the rich and nourishing earth it strikes its roots, and so grows on the nutriment of the hidden soil. If you can reach down into God, and feed altogether on Him, you may present the beautiful spectacle. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S UPWARD GROWTH. "Rooted and built up in Him." 1. Not built up as the house is built, with materials gathered here and there, and wrought together from without. The tree builds itself from the heart, and so does the Christian. Morality seeks to overlay men with good works. Its office is to get them to take on goodness in successive layers, by contact with good men and good books. Here is organic growth as against mechanical, vital increase as against artificial. 2. The duty of habitual aspiration after the highest attainments in grace is here urged. It has been said that no man can gaze on the marble statue of the Apollo Belvidere without standing more erect, and dilating his form in unconscious imitation. If the perfect physical form produces such impression, how much more the man who is perfect in spiritual stature and in moral greatness—the man Christ Jesus? III. THE CHRISTIAN'S OUTWARD GROWTH. "Abounding therein with thanksgiving." This is the branching out into all service, and fruitfulness, and praise. 1. The one significant fact concerning the gifts of God to us is their exceeding abundance. The grace of God which bringeth salvation "was exceeding abundant." The mercy of God is "abundant mercy." "The Holy Ghost is shed forth abundantly." It is "our God who will abundantly pardon." "An entrance be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of God." And as though to sum up all, the apostle writes of Him who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." 2. What is the abundance bestowed for except that it may flow out in abounding blessings to others? (*A. J. Gordon, D.D.*) *Retrospection the basis of progress*:—I. CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN ITS APPREHENSION OF CHRIST. "Ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord." 1. There are two opposing theories as to the Person of Christ—the rationalistic, which rules out His Godhead; the revealed, which is the basis of the catholic faith. The one holds to Him as the perfection of humanity, the other as the incarnation of Deity. 2. Two systems of theology widely distinct are dependent on these theories. The one puts man at the centre, and is wholly human; the other enthrones God, and is essentially Divine. Two of the widest extremes of religious life flow from these systems. The first is a religion of self-development, and depends on personal culture. In the second, regeneration is a supernatural birth superinduced by a power coming directly from God. The one has its type in education, the other in faith. 3. There is only one Christ. He is not a variable or divisible quantity. His personality is definite, His claims absolute, His work specific. 4. It is within the one or the other of these systems that we must posit our decisions. We cannot accept of both. If the one is true the other is false. We must be for Christ or against Him. II. CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN ITS RECEPTION OF CHRIST. "Ye have received." 1. There is agreement with some shades of difference in the terms receiving, believing, trusting, Christ. He who intelligently believes the testimony, trusts in the promise and receives the gift. "To as many as received Him," &c. Here are two things implied. (1) Faith receives the whole

Christ. All that we see of the incarnate Word in His acts, teaching, death, &c., Christian faith accepts. And then a supernatural person necessitates a supernatural mission; and also the system being given, we should expect to find what we do find, a supernatural person its central figure. Christ and His system are co-ordinate and identical. Accept of Christ, and you must receive His truth. Receive the record, and you must accept His person. Faith thus makes all the truth a welcome guest to the Christian heart. (2) On the side of faith Christ asks and gets the whole of man. The full integrity of the mental and moral life goes over in this act of faith to Christ. Thus there is a virtual exchange of two individual persons, a mutual transfer of relations and interests, out of which comes the sublime unity of a new and indivisible life. "I am crucified with Christ," &c. 2. The life of faith, as embodied in the moralities of Christian living, is thus provided for, and follows this consecrating act. "Rooted and built up and established." (1) Life has its genesis in a root—faith in Christ. All life is a feeding thing. From the flower in the wall up to the brain and soul all things live by what they feed upon. In all life there is that into which life strikes its root. (2) Growth is a result of manifold processes. It is not a mechanical product. You can fabricate material structures: growth is an organic creation. To make an atom or a world or to destroy them may require no more than the instant volition of God. To grow a grain of wheat He employs the grandest forces in the universe; and these are yoked by a thousand subtle laws kept at work by His personal will. How much more grand are the agencies with which He originates, feeds, and glorifies life in the soul of man is seen in this, that in the one service He harnesses law, and in the other He incarnates Himself. "He is our life." (3) In the fervid enunciation of figures the apostle appears for a moment to get into a complication of incongruous similitudes—"walking" implying action, "rooted" demanding rest; and yet there is consistency. Progress upward in the corn, e.g., comes out of fixedness of root. Unroot it, and you kill its growth. So we "grow up in all things into Christ" only as we rest in the fixedness of faith.

III. CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN ITS SUBJECTION TO CHRIST. 1. The emphasis is on the word "Lord." What is this sovereign headship of Christ? (1) In the Church mediatorially, "He is the head of the body"; administratively, "He is Lord of all"; virtually, and in fact, "He is our life." (2) Higher up in the ranges of spiritual life "in all things He has the pre-eminence." God has highly exalted Him. All the angels of God worship Him. (3) In the material worlds "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." They are what He makes them and where He places them. They get their use and glory as He employs them. All agencies, influences, events, ages, are tributary to Christ. (4) So in the future of the world's history "He must reign." Man's proud intellect, his enterprise, wealth, art, science, &c., are coming, and must finally come, to serve Him. 2. But there is a more close and vital relation in the faith that gives to Christ the lordship over His people. What, then, is the dominion under which we voluntarily place ourselves in our surrender to Christ? (1) Its sphere is specific. "The kingdom of God is within you"—where the personality of the man is. (2) Its claim is absolute. "Ye are not your own." Christ claims to be monarch absolute over mind, body, &c., because all has been "bought with a price." (3) And the mind is free and unconstrained in its surrender. Man's will is free; and yet how man may exert that freedom, on what objects, for what ends, and with what results, is to be determined by the authority of the Lord Christ. "One is your Master." (J. Burton.) *Faith is receiving Christ*:—Suppose that you should go to a baker's window, and stand there for an hour, and stare at the bread, I do not think that the sight would fill you much. No, you must eat, or else there might be tons of bread within reach, and yet you would die of famine. You might be buried in a grave of bread, and it would be of no use to you. Even manna would not nourish you unless you ate it. You must receive food into yourself, or it is not food to you. The Saviour Himself, if you do not receive Him by faith, will be no Saviour to you. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *As and So*:—There is great safety in going back to first principles. To make sure of being in the right way, it is good to look back at the entrance. Well begun is half done. The Colossians have commenced well; let them go on as they have begun. I. THE FACT STATED. Sincere believers have "received" Christ. This is the old gospel word. Here is no evolution from within, but a gift from without heartily accepted by the soul. This is free grace language; "received," not earned or purchased. Not received Christ's words—though that is true, for we

prize every precept and doctrine—but received Christ. Observe—1. The personality of Him whom they received. “Christ Jesus the Lord,” His person, Godhead, humanity, Himself into their (1) knowledge; (2) understanding; (3) affections; (4) trust; (5) as their life at their new birth, for when they received Him He gave them power to become the sons of God. 2. The threefold character in which they received Him. (1) As Christ anointed and commissioned of God; (2) as Jesus, the Saviour to redeem and sanctify them; (3) as the Lord to reign and rule over them with undivided sway. 3. The looking away from self in this saving act of reception. It is not said, as ye have fought for Jesus and won Him; or, studied the truth and discovered Christ Jesus; but, as ye have “received” Him. This strains us of everything like boasting, for all we do is to receive. 4. The blessed certainty of the experience of those to whom Paul wrote: “As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord.” They had really received Jesus; they had found the blessing to be real; no doubt remained as to their possession of it. II. THE COUNSEL GIVEN: “So walk ye in Him.” There are four things suggested by “walk.” 1. Life. 2. Continuance. 3. Activity. 4. Progress. III. THE MODEL WHICH IS PRESENTED TO US. We are to walk in Christ Jesus the Lord “as we received Him.” And how was that? We received Him—1. Gratefully. 2. Humbly. 3. Joyfully. 4. Effectually. 5. Unreservedly. Thus we should continue to walk in Him, evermore in our daily life excelling in all these points. Alas, some have never received Jesus! Our closing words must be addressed to such. (*Ibid.*) *Receiving Christ and walking in Him*:—It was quite in accordance with Paul’s logical mind that he should often place what he is teaching in a proposition: “As ye have received, so walk.” All true religion lies in that analogy. I. THE RECEPTION. 1. As what? (1) As Christ, the anointed of God; (2) as Jesus, your Divine Saviour; (3) as Lord, “the King of your heart. 2. How? By an act of faith. Faith was the hand that took the inestimable gift. 3. Whither? Into your hearts. 4. With what consequence? He became united to your very being, and is now your own. II. THE WALK. 1. As the reception was an act of faith, so the walk must be a walk of faith. 2. As we received pardon for sin, so we must walk in liberty, free from the bondage of sin and fear. 3. As we received Christ Jesus as Lord, so we must walk in the path of His commandments. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The life and walk of faith*:—We shall deal with the text—I. BY WAY OF EXPOSITION. 1. The life of faith is represented as (1) receiving. This implies (a) the opposite of anything like merit. (b) A sense of realization making the matter a reality. One cannot receive a shadow or a phantom, but only something substantial. While we are without faith Christ is a name or a history merely. By the act of faith Christ becomes a real person in our consciousness. (c) Grasping it. What I receive becomes my own, so by faith Christ becomes my Christ. Look at some of the senses in which the word is used in Scripture, such as—(d) Taking—we take Christ into us as the empty vessel takes in water. (e) Holding—what we take in. A sieve does not receive water. The life of faith consists in holding Christ within us the hope of glory. Believing. “He came to His own, and His own received Him not.” (f) Entertaining. Thus the barbarous people at Melita received Paul. After we have found Christ we entreat Him to come in and sup with us. (g) Enjoying. We read of receiving the crown of life, which means enjoying heaven and being satisfied with its bliss; and so when we receive Christ we enjoy Him. (2) Receiving Christ. Salvation may be described as the blind receiving sight, the dead life, &c.; but we have not only received these things, we have received Christ, both as Saviour and Lord, in His Divinity and humanity. (3) This is a matter of certainty; and the apostle goes on to argue from it. It is not a supposition or a hope, or a trust, but a fact. “Ye have.” 2. The walk of faith. (1) Walk implies (a) action. The reception of Christ is not to be made a mere thing of thought for the chamber. We must not sit down in indolence, but carry into practical effect what we believe. (b) Perseverance; not only being in Christ to-day, but all our life. (c) Habit. A man’s walk is the constant tenor of his life. (d) Continuance. It is not to be suspended. How many people think that in the morning and evening they ought to come into the company of Christ, and then they may be in the world all day. (2) Christ is to be the element in which we are to walk. If a man has to cross a river, he fords it quickly, but just as we walk in the air are we to walk in Christ. (a) As Christ was when we received Him the only ground of our faith, so long as we live we are to stand to the same point. (b) We received Christ as the substance of our faith, and just as

you then no more doubted the reality of Christ than your own existence, so walk ye in Him. (c) Then Christ was the joy of your souls; let Him always be so. (d) He was then the object of your love, and must be for ever. II. BY WAY OF ADVOCACY. Suppose that having been so far saved by Christ we should begin to walk in some one else, what then? 1. What a dishonour to our Lord. 2. What reason is there for the change? (1) Has Christ proved Himself insufficient? (2) Can philosophy and vain deceit offer you a wisdom such as His? (3) Do ceremonies tempt you? You have all that you can require in Christ. 3. What can your heart desire beyond God? Having Christ, you have God, and having God, you have everything. III. BY WAY OF APPLICATION. 1. To those who complain of a want of communion. If it were worth your while to come to Him at first, it is worth while for you always to keep to Him. 2. To those who complain of a want of comfort. No wonder, if you do not live near the source of consolation. 3. To the inconsistent. When a man walks in Christ, he acts as Christ would act. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *The Christly character*:—In this statement of fact Paul's argument culminates. He appeals to their experience. They had received the doctrine of Christ from Epaphras, and He Himself had entered their hearts. I. The ORIGIN of the Christly character. "Received Christ," which means to accept Him—1. As the supreme object of the soul's love. 2. As the imperial guide of the soul's activities. 3. As the only Physician of the soul's diseases. This is the reception—not merely the reception of His doctrines into the intellect, but Himself into the heart as its moral monarch. II. ITS PROGRESS. "Walk in Him." This implies—1. A most vital connection with Him. "In Him." In His ideas, spirit, aims, character. 2. A possibility of walking out of Him. Peter did so. Man's liberty as a responsible being and the Word of God show this. 3. A real personal exertion. No one can walk for us. (D. Thomas, D.D.) *Christ is the believer's foundation*:—The lighthouse tower, that stands among the tumbling waves, seems to have nothing but them to rest on, yet there, stately and stable, it stands, beautiful in the calm, and calm in the wintry tempest, guiding the sailor on to his desired haven, past the rolling reef, through the gloom of the darkest night, and the waters of the gloomiest sea. Why is it stable? You see nothing but the waves, but beneath the waves, down below the rolling, tumbling billows, its foundation is the solid rock. And what that tower is to the house on yon sand-bank Christ's righteousness is to mine, Christ's works to my best ones. (T. Guthrie.) *Progress is gradual*:—Gradual ascent is as necessary to the mind in order to its reaching a great idea, as it is to the body in order to its reaching a great height. We cannot ascend to the pinnacle of a cathedral, which towers aloft in air, without either steps or an inclined plane. We cannot reach the summit of a mountain without first toiling up its base, then traversing its breast, and then successively crossing the limits where verdure passes into crag, and crag into a wilderness of snow. Even when we have gained the highest point, we are still, it is true, at an infinite distance from the blue vault of the firmament which stretches above our heads. Still we have a better and more exalted view of what that firmament is: we have at least risen above the fogs and mists which obscure its glory; and the air which encompasses us is transparent to the eye, and invigorating to the frame. Now, the law of man's bodily progress is also the law of his mental progress. Both must be gradual. No grand idea can be realized except by successive steps and stages, which the mind must use as landing-places in its ascent. (Dr. Goulburn.)

Ver. 8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit.—*The spoiler and his implement*:—See to it, says Paul, lest there be some one—I do not say more, you can guess my meaning—to carry you off as his spoil (not take you from you). The expression grasps powerfully the essence of the proselytizing spirit; the proselytizing spoil is the person proselytized. He aims at doing this through that which is at once in its arrogant claims a high philosophy, and in its miserable reality an empty deceit; a philosophy, artful, moulded in accordance with an esoteric system, pervaded by five fatal deficiencies. I. It is merely TRADITIONAL, and, therefore, of precarious truth. II. It is HUMAN, and, therefore, deficient in authority. III. It is ELEMENTARY, belonging to the "outworn creed," to the rudiments of religion, and, therefore, unfitted for Christian manhood. IV. It is MATERIAL, not connected with the soul's true home and centre, but with the palpable and external, and is, therefore, deficient in spirituality. V. And being all this, assuredly, and as matter of fact, it is NOT AFTER CHRIST. (H. P. Alexander.) The false teachers aimed at making the Colossians their prey, carrying them off body and

soul. They had been rescued from the bondage of darkness; they had been transferred to the kingdom of light; they had been settled there as free citizens (chap. i. 12, 13); and now there was a danger that they should fall into a state worse than their former slavery, that they should be carried off as so much booty (Comp. 2 Tim. iii. 6). (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) *Philosophy discriminated*:—Philosophy, taken in its simplest acceptation, is only a higher degree of good sense, which, not pretending to know all things, desires to have a thorough knowledge of those objects, the knowledge of which has been placed within our reach. It sets no value on names and appearances; prejudice is not the basis of any of its judgments; neither number nor time has the effect of transforming error into truth. It believes not, denies not, affirms not, at hazard, or on slight grounds. Not trusting to a first look it searches for differences under resemblances, and resemblances under differences; alternately uniting what the vulgar separate, and separating what they unite. While all facts are isolated to the inattentive eye, they are connected and linked together by the eye of philosophy, which does what it can to trace the chain which unites them. In every case fixing on what is essential, and throwing aside what is merely accidental, it comes at last to recognize a common nature, a common principle, a common origin, in objects which seemed at first to have nothing in common. It thus reduces the innumerable facts of the moral and physical world to a small number of ideas, and these to a smaller number still, always gravitating towards the unity which it will never reach, but to which a mysterious power constrains it always to aspire. To say all in one word, philosophy differs from vulgar reason, in applying itself to penetrate from the exterior of things or their envelope, to their principle, or at least to the idea which explains the greatest number of possible facts, and before which it is constrained to stop as if out of breath. When shall it stop? What is its legitimate sphere? This question is of more importance than any other. Philosophy does not gain more honour by extending its search, than by recognizing its limits. It reigns in this apparent dethronement. It is its glory to know how to restrict itself, just as in the domain of morality it is the glory of the will to stop in proper time and make an effort upon itself. But in order to know what it is able and what unable to do, it takes account of its processes and instruments, compares its means with its end, and not being able to place all its greatness in knowledge finds part of it in confessing its ignorance, and so to speak, in knowing certainly that it does not know. St. Paul did not repudiate this philosophy, and could have no intention to repudiate it. He knew as well as we, that in matters of religion, and even of revealed religion, there may be either a good or a bad philosophy, but that at all events there is philosophy. We cannot condemn philosophy without condemning ourselves to silence on the subject of religion which presupposes it, and guides it, and would create it if it did not previously exist. Accordingly St. Paul has not condemned it; and when he warns his disciples against a science "falsely so called," his words imply the existence of a science that is true. Now philosophy is a part of science, or rather is itself the science of science. Nor, moreover, could he have condemned it, without condemning himself who has made such happy and frequent use of it. It were vain to deny that the writings of St. Paul and of St. John are full of the highest philosophy. Let us be understood. We do not say full of sublime truth, but of that philosophy which we have endeavoured to characterize, which rises from appearances to reality, from accident to essence, from the particular to the general, from variable facts to immutable principles. (*A. Vinet, D.D.*) *St. Paul's attitude towards philosophy*:—The apostle does not condemn "philosophy" absolutely: the philosophy and vain deceit of this passage corresponds to what he says in 1 Tim. vi. 20. But though it is not condemned it is disparaged by the connection in which it is placed. The term was doubtless used by the false teachers to describe their system. Though essentially Greek as a name and an idea it had found its way into Jewish circles. Philo used it in speaking of the Hebrew religion and Mosaic law, and also of Essenism, which was probably the progenitor of the Colossian heresy. So, too, Josephus speaks of three Jewish sects as philosophies. It should be remembered also, that in this later age, owing to Roman influence, the term was used to describe practical not less than speculative systems, so that it would cover the ascetic life as well as the mystic theosophy of the Colossian heretics. Hence the apostle is here flinging back at these false teachers a favourite term of their own—"their vaunted philosophy, which is hollow and misleading." The word, indeed, could claim a truly noble origin; for it is said to have arisen out of the humility of Pythagoras who called himself "a lover of wisdom." In such a sense the term would entirely accord with the spirit

and teaching of St. Paul; for it bore testimony to the insufficiency of the human intellect and the need of a revelation. But in his age it had come to be associated generally with the idea of subtle dialectics and profitless speculation; while in this particular instance it was combined with a mystic cosmogony and angelology which contributed a fresh element of danger. As contrasted with the power and fulness and certainty of revelation, all such philosophy was foolishness (1 Cor. i. 20). It is worth observing that this word, which to the Greeks denoted the highest effort of the intellect, occurs here alone in St. Paul, just as he uses "virtue," which was their term to express the highest moral excellence, in a single passage only (Phil. iv. 8). The reason is much the same in both cases. The gospel had deposed the *terrors* as inadequate to the higher standard, whether of knowledge or of practice, *which* it had introduced. The attitude of the fathers towards philosophy while it was a living thing was various. Clement, who was followed in the main by the earlier Alexandines, regards Greek philosophy not only as a preliminary training for the gospel, but even as in some sense a covenant given by God to the Greeks. Others, who were the great majority, and of whom Tertullian may be taken as an extreme type, set their forces directly against it, seeing in it only the parent of all heretical teaching. St. Paul's speech at Athens, on the only occasion when he is known to have been brought into direct personal contact with Greek philosophers (Acts xvii. 18), shows that his sympathies would have been at least as much with Clement's representations as with Tertullian's. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) *Philosophy true and false:—I. TRUE PHILOSOPHY IS NOT CONDEMNED BY ST. PAUL.* We cannot understand this concerning any branch or the whole body, lest God be called into judgment. For philosophy is the offspring of right reason; and this light of reason is infused into the mind by God. We, therefore, judge not the discipline of the Platonists, &c., to be true philosophy, but the principles of every one which agree with truth and morals. The errors of theologians do not pertain to theology, nor do those of philosophers and philosophy. These we are free to condemn, but not truth discovered by natural reason. *II. WHAT KIND OF PHILOSOPHY IS EXCLUDED BY THE APOSTLE.* That which is vain and deceitful, viz., the product of reason carried beyond its bounds. Philosophy is to be listened to when it pronounces about things subject to itself, but when it would determine concerning the worship of God and salvation, &c., which are beyond the grasp of reason and depend wholly on revelation, it brings nothing solid or true. St. Paul alleges the cause of this in 1 Cor. ii. 14. As animals can judge very well concerning things which relate to sense, yet cannot judge of human affairs, neither can men pronounce by natural light respecting heavenly doctrine, although they may determine by it what is good and right in human concerns. This was the error of the false teachers who, in speculating about the method of approach to God and of redemption, went beyond the declarations which God had made on these matters. *III. THE ABUSE AND USE OF PHILOSOPHY.* 1. Its abuse. (1) When it attempts to deduce the fundamentals of religion from its own principles. These principles may be true, but there cannot be elicited from them what is to be determined respecting the Trinity, *e.g.*, which is to be deduced from higher principles, viz., the will of God revealed in His Word. (2) When it opposes its own principles which are true in the order of nature to theological principles which are above the order of nature. Thus it is true that out of nothing, nothing can be made; but philosophers err when they think they can hence conclude against creation which the Scriptures teach as done not by virtue of natural causes, but by the power of God. (3) When it obtrudes for legitimate conclusions its errors drawn sometimes by false consequences from true premises. 2. Its uses. (1) For the clear understanding of many passages of Scripture. Although the principles of our religion are derived from God, yet there are many examples and illustrations which cannot be understood without the aid of human literature. Its references to the heavenly bodies require the knowledge of astronomy; to animals, of natural history, &c. (2) For discriminating between and treating religious controversies; for appreciating the coherence and mutual establishment of heavenly doctrine, and for determining what is consistent and inconsistent with them. Our faith ascends above reason, but not irrationally. I believe the resurrection, because reason proves the doctrine to be delivered in the Bible. I do not believe in purgatory because reason can collect it from no part of Scripture according to the rules of sound logic. This use of reason in sacred things God approves and requires (Eph. v. 17, iv. 14; 1 Thess. v. 21; Acts xvii. 11). (3) For the instruction of those who have not yet embraced Christ, and for resistance if they should oppose religion. He who has lived in darkness is not to be drawn

directly into the sunlight lest he should be overpowered rather than enlightened ; so they, who have been educated in paganism are first to be awakened by reasons drawn from natural light (Acts xvii. 24). And then it is to be employed as a **ram-part** and weapon against opponents. Julian the apostate said "We are caught by our own wings" when he saw the philosophers routed by the Christians through the advantages of philosophy. (4) For Christian education, since the mind is prepared and rendered more acute by philosophical studies, and our discourses on sacred things are much enriched by the good sayings of philosophers. (5) For the delight of hearers. As Clemens says, "The truth which is sought from Scripture is as necessary to the life as bread ; but that which is sought from other instruction is as sauce and sweetmeats." (*Bp. Davenant.*) *Philosophy and its counterfeit* :—I. THE COUNTERFEIT OF A GOOD THING. 1. The good thing—"philosophy." Etymologically it means love of wisdom, but in modern use it stands for a system of knowledge. When applied to any particular department of knowledge, it stands for the collection of general laws or principles under which all the subordinate phenomena of facts relating to that subject are comprehended. It is a good thing because—(1) Christ's spirit is good. Christ's spirit is a love of truth, a desire to find out the first principles or reason of things ; a desire to penetrate all phenomena and to enter in and study that invisible region where all the hidden forces of the universe are at work. (2) Its process is good—observation, comparison, generalization. Such a process is soul-quickenng, invigorating, and ennobling. (3) Its results are good. All the arts that bless and adorn the civilized world are but ideas reached by philosophy. 2. The counterfeit. There is a false philosophy, a miserable imitation of the true. (1) It is deceptive, "vain deceit." It is mere fiction, guesses, castles in the air. Its light, such as it is, is a mere *ignis fatuus* rising out of the muddy marshes of a vain imagination. (2) It is ill founded—"After the tradition," &c. It has its origin in mere human guesses, and the rough undigested elements of a mere worldly knowledge. It is built on crudities. (3) It is anti-Christian—"not after Christ." Not after the subject, style, and spirit of His teaching. II. THE COUNTERFEIT OF A GOOD THING IS DANGEROUS. What thousands in all ages have been made a prey of by counterfeit philosophy ! They have been plundered and borne away into confusion and ruin by wrong ideas of God, the universe, and man and his nature, obligations, and destiny. "Beware" of it. 1. It has many forms. It appears—(1) In natural sciences. (2) In ontological theories. (3) In theological creeds. (4) In ethical enactments. 2. It has fascinating aspects. It often comes in the stateliness of the scholar, in the force of the reasoner, in the grandeur of the rhetorician, in the sublimity of the poet. 3. It works insidiously. It instils its errors quietly ; and silently as the laws of nature they often work out their own ends. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The marks of a false philosophy* :—It is known—I. BY ITS PROFITLESS SPECULATIONS. II. BY ITS PURELY HUMAN ORIGIN. "After the tradition of men." 1. The human mind is limited. 2. All human knowledge is imperfect. "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." III. BY ITS UNDUE EXALTATION OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES. "After the rudiments of the world." A true philosophy, while starting necessarily with elementary principles, conducts to increasing knowledge and spiritual exaltation and liberty. A false philosophy fetters the mind by exaggerating the importance of first principles and insisting on their eternal obligation. IV. BY ITS CHRISTLESSNESS. "And not after Christ." V. BY ITS DESTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE. "Spoil you"—not strip off, but carry away as spoil (*Gen. xiv. 12-16*). Man is never so grievously despoiled as when his soul is robbed by error. "The thief cometh not," &c. (*John x. 10*). VI. AGAINST A FALSE PHILOSOPHY THE CHURCH MUST BE FAITHFULLY WARNED. 1. Because it is seductive in its pretensions. 2. Because it is baneful in its effect. (*G. Barlow.*) *The bane and the antidote* :—I. THE POISON. "Take heed" implies a real, not an hypothetical danger. Paul is not crying "wolf." "Any one," *i.e.*, somebody ; as if he had said, "I name no names—it is not the persons, but the principles I fight against—but you know whom I mean." "Maketh spoil of you." He sees the converts taken prisoners, and led away with a cord round their necks, like the strings of captives on the Assyrian monuments. He had spoken in chap. i. 13 of the conqueror who had translated them ; now he fears lest a robber horde, making a raid upon the peaceful colonists in their happy new homes, may sweep them again into bondage. The cord whose fatal noose will be tightened round them if they do not take care is "philosophy and vain deceit." If Paul had been writing in English he would have put philosophy in inverted commas, to show that he was quoting

the heretical teachers' own name for their system. For true love of wisdom neither Paul nor Paul's Master have anything but praise. The thing spoken of here has no resemblance, except in name, to what the Greeks in their better days called philosophy, and nothing warrants the representation that Christianity is antagonistic to it. 1. "Empty deceit" describes this system. It is like a bladder full of wind. Its lofty pretension is that it is a love of wisdom, but if we look at it closely it is a fraud. 2. It is "after the traditions of men." (1) It is significant that the expression is a word of Christ's (Mark vii. 8). The portentous and smothering undergrowth of such traditions is preserved in the Talmud, where for thousands of pages we get nothing but Rabbi So-and-so said this, but Rabbi So-and-so said that, until we feel stifled, and long for one Divine word to still all the babble. The oriental element in the heresy, on the other hand, prided itself on a hidden teaching too sacred to be entrusted to books, and was passed from lip to lip in some close conclave. The fact that all this had no higher source than man's imaginings, seems to Paul the condemnation of the whole system. His theory is that in Christ every man has the full truth. What an absurd descent then to "turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven" to human voices and thoughts. (2) These special forms of tradition trouble no man now. But the tendency to give heed to human teachers, and to suffer them to come between us and Christ is deep in us all. There is at one extreme the man who believes in no revelation, but pays his teacher a deference as absolute as that which he regards superstition when rendered to Christ. At the other are the Christians who will not let Christ and the Scripture speak unless the Church be present at the interview, like a jailer, with a bunch of man-made creeds jingling at its belt. 3. It is "after the rudiments of the world." (1) Rudiments means the letters of the alphabet, and hence "elements," "first principles," the A, B, C, of a science. They boasted of mysterious doctrines for the initiated, of which the plain truths Paul preached were but "milk for babes." Paul retorts that the true mystery is the Word he preached, and that the poverty-stricken elements were in that swelling inanity which called itself wisdom and was not. He brands it as rudiments of "the world," which is worse, as belonging to the outward and material, and not to the higher region of the spiritual, where Christian thought ought to dwell. Its use in Gal. iv. 3, points to a similar meaning here. He regards it as a retrogression to childish things, and as a pitiable descent to a lower sphere. (2) The forms which were urged on the Colossians are long since antiquated, but the tendency to turn Christianity into ceremonial is running with a powerful current to-day. But enlisting the senses as allies of the spirit in worship is risky work. The theory that such aids make a ladder, by which the soul may ascend to God, is perilously apt to be confuted by experience, which finds that the soul is quite as likely to go down the ladder as up. Stained windows are lovely, and white windows are "barnlike"; but perhaps if the object is to get light these solemn purples and glowing yellows are rather in the way. A lesson for the day is Paul's principle here, that a Christianity making much of ceremonies is a retrogression. 4. Paul sums up his indictment in one damning clause—"not after Christ." He is neither its origin, substance, rule, nor standard. II. THE ANTIDOTE (vers. 9-10). 1. These words may be a reason for the warning, "take heed for;" or they may be a reason for the exclusion of Christless teaching. Anything not after Christ is *ipso facto* wrong. "In Him" is placed with emphasis at the beginning, and implies "nowhere else." "Dwelleth," i.e., has its permanent abode. "All the fulness of the Godhead, i.e., the whole unbounded attributes of Deity." "Bodily" points to the incarnation, and is an advance on chap. i. 19. So we are pointed to the glorified humanity of Christ as the abode now and for ever of all the fulness of the Divine nature which is thereby brought very near to us. This truth shivers all the dreams about angel-mediators, and brands as folly every attempt to learn God anywhere but in Him. 2. If He be the sole temple of Deity why go anywhere else to see or possess God? "In Him ye are full," which sets forth their living incorporation in Christ, and consequent participation in His fulness. Every one may enter into that union by continuous faith. All the fulness of God is in Him, that from Him it may pass to us. According to our need it will vary itself, being to each what the moment most requires—wisdom, or strength, or beauty, or patience. 3. The process of receiving all the Divine fulness is a continuous one. We can but be approximating to the possession of the infinite treasure, and since the treasure is infinite, and we can indefinitely grow in capacity of receiving God, there must be an eternal continuance of the filling, and an eternal increase of the measure of what fills us. The indwelling Christ will "enlarge the place of His

habitation," as the walls stretch and the roof soars. He will fill the greater house with the light of His presence and the fragrance of His name. 4. From such thoughts Paul would have us draw the conclusion—how foolish it must be to go to any other source for the supply of our needs. Christ is "the Head of all principality," &c. Why then go to the ministers when we have access to the King? Why leave the fountain of living water for the broken cisterns? (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The gospel to be preached in its purity*:—Astronomers tell us that the light of the sun is pure white light, but when it comes in contact with the atmosphere of our earth it becomes discoloured, simply because the medium through which it passes is impure. So it is with the light of heaven when it passes through the traditions of men. (*S. H. Leary, D.C.L.*) The pure milk of God's Word is not to be adulterated with the chalk of human opinions. (*Ibid.*) *The gospel to be preached simply*:—Of the works of a famous alchemist of the thirteenth century, it is said that, "whoever would read his book to find out the secret would employ all his labour in vain." All the gold makers who have written upon their favourite mystery are in the like predicament, no one can comprehend what the secret is which they pretend to divulge. May we not shrewdly guess that if they had any secret to tell they would put it in intelligible language, and that their pompous and involved sentences are only a screen for their utter ignorance of the matter? When we hear preachers talking of Divine things in a style savouring more of metaphysical subtlety than of gospel plainness; when the seeking sinner cannot find out the way of salvation because of their philosophical jargon, may we not with justice suspect that the preacher does not know the gospel, and conceals his culpable ignorance behind the veil of rhetorical magniloquence? Surely if the man understood a matter so important to all his hearers as the way of salvation, he would feel constrained to tell it out in words which all might comprehend. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 9. **In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.**—**I. THE HOUSE,** or place of residence—"in Him." In the man Christ Jesus, or in that human nature in which He carried on the business of our salvation; as despicable and abject as it was in the eyes of men, yet it was the temple and seat of the Godhead. **II. THE INHABITANT**—"the fulness of the Godhead;" not a portion of God only, or His gifts and graces (as we are made partakers of the Divine nature, 1 Pet. i. 4.), but the whole Godhead. **III. THE MANNER**—"bodily." The word may relate—1. To the shadows and figures of the law, and so it signifieth essentially, substantially. God dwelt in the tabernacle, temple, or ark of the covenant, *συνβολικῶς*, because of the figures of His presence. In Christ, *σωματικῶς*, as His human nature was the true tabernacle or temple in which He resideth. Christ calls His human nature a temple (John ii. 19), or else—2. With respect to the intimacy and closeness of the union. So *σωματικῶς*, may be rendered personally; for body is often put for a person. The two natures were so united in Him, that He is one Christ. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The fulness of Christ*:—Ships have been wrecked by mistaking one light for another. Men in life's voyage often make the same terrible blunder. Signals of danger, however, are set up by God to save us from so tragic an end. False teachers were proclaiming fantastic doctrines, but of such death-luring lights the apostle bids the Colossians beware. We need the same warning. Error confronts us in magazines, newspapers, and pulpits. Paul would have us know that all doctrine is false which does not radiate from Christ. Note—**I. MAN'S CONDITION IS A NECESSITOUS ONE.** 1. He has Divinely implanted longings for whose satisfaction he has to go out of himself. He has (1) Social cravings. He was not designed for loneliness but for companionship. (2) Mental cravings, which sometimes show themselves in the form of curiosity; but the more cultured a man becomes, his mental longings assume a higher form. The journeys taken, libraries collected, the efforts made to ransack past and present witness to these. (3) Moral and spiritual cravings. What efforts he has made to know God and be at peace with Him. 2. These longings distinguish man from the animal creation, and witness to the grandeur of His soul. 3. Their existence implies that there is somewhere that by which they may be satisfied. **II. Man's necessitous condition is COMPLETELY MET BY THE DIVINE FULNESS.** This fulness is—1. The plenitude of the Godhead. Who can describe this? It is a fathomless ocean and a limitless sky. All we can say is that it is a fulness out of which all our need may be supplied. But we may know of boundless wealth, and yet remain destitute because not able or permitted to approach it. Is this so here? No. As the beams flow from the sun's fulness

within the reach and for the use of every tree and hedgerow, so the Divine fulness has come down to us all. 2. In the person of Christ, not typically but really. (1) He meets our social cravings. He has become one with us in sharing our common life, with its sorrows and joys. No one need now be lonely, since here is One who has everything for which we yearn. (2) He meets our mental cravings. He is the Truth, the Light of the world, the Wisdom of God. (3) He meets our moral cravings in His revelation of the Father, and in His atonement for sin. Why, then, go to philosophy or sacraments which can only disappoint. 3. Present and unchanging. The Colossian heretics held a temporary fulness; Paul affirms the Divine fulness "dwells" in Him now and for ever. Earthly things filter away with pitiless haste, but He is "the same to-day," &c. Then while we should avoid going elsewhere we should flee to Him at once. His willingness is equal to His ability to distribute. (*E. H. Palmer.*) *The fulness of God dwelling in Christ:—* I. THE IMPORT OF THE TEXT. 1. All the fulness of the Godhead. The original signifies that by which a thing is filled, completed, or made perfect. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," *i.e.*, all it contains. So the text means all the natural and moral attributes, everything which renders the Divine nature complete. It cannot mean anything less, for if one perfection were taken away there would be something wanting to, and therefore destructive of the fulness of the Godhead. 2. All this fulness dwells in Christ. The word is not that used in John i. 14, to dwell in a tabernacle—a temporary residence, but one which signifies to live in a house, a permanent habitation. So then all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ abidingly. 3. Bodily means real and substantial as against shadowy and figurative. The Mosaic law was a shadow, Christ was the body. II. THIS IMPORT CORRESPONDS WITH OTHER SCRIPTURES. 1. We are taught in many places that the Father and the Spirit dwelt in Christ. Our Lord often declared that the Father dwelt in Him, and added "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He is also represented as having the Spirit without measure. Now the whole Godhead is included in Father, Son, and Spirit. Wherever these dwell there is the Divine fulness. They dwell in Christ. 2. Christ is represented as possessing all the perfections of Deity—omnipotence in creation and Providence; omniscience in His knowledge of the Father, and of the heart of man; omnipresence in being with His disciples alway. In fact, He is all in all, and therefore has the fulness of the Godhead bodily. III. INFERENCES. If all the fulness of the Godhead is in Christ, then—1. In Him alone can God be found. Men have forsaken God; but they must find Him again or be lost for ever. It is His will that men should seek after Him if haply they may find Him. Now if we wish to find any one we must go to His residence. So since the whole Godhead resides in Jesus as in a permanent habitation, we must repair to Him to find God. "I am the Way, the Truth," &c. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son," &c. Men may seek Him in the works of creation, in providence, in His Word; but they will never find Him till they come to Christ, for even the Scriptures can only make us wise unto salvation through Him. But if we come to Him, God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness will give us the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. 2. No man can obtain a portion of that fulness except by applying to Christ. Did all the light of the universe dwell in the sun; none could obtain light except from the sun. Were all the water that exists collected into one reservoir none could obtain water but by applying to that reservoir. Now, unless we obtain some of this fulness, we must pine in eternal want. The mercy which pardons sin, the light which illumines the mind, the grace which purifies the heart, the strength which resists and overcomes, the consolation which supports, bright hope and everlasting joy flow from this, and no man can partake of them without partaking of it. Infinitely better to be destitute of everything else than to want this. For it the Saviour invites us to apply to Him. 3. The necessity and worth of faith in Him. Look first at Him and see in Him an inexhaustible fulness of blessing; look next at mankind wanting everything and therefore wretched. Now what is wanted is a channel of communication through which this fulness may flow, so as to be filled with it. Such a channel is faith. Hence John says of believers, and of those only, "Of His fulness we have received." (*E. Payson, D.D.*)

Ver. 10. Ye are complete in Him. The false teachers at Colossæ were Jews, but not Judaizers. They were philosophers. They designed to substitute philosophy for Christianity, not by denying the latter, but by explaining it. They

distinguished between faith and knowledge. Faith was for the people, knowledge for the educated few. The objects of faith were the historical and doctrinal statements of the Bible. The objects of knowledge were the speculative truths underlying those statements, and into which they were to be sublimated. Paul's object is to prove—I. THAT PHILOSOPHY WAS AN UTTER FAILURE. He pronounces it—1. Vain, *i.e.*, void (1) of truth; (2) of reality; (3) of worth and power. 2. Deceit. It disappointed expectation, and betrayed those who trusted to its guidance. This was no slight matter, and so he warned his readers lest any man in this way should make a prey of them to their utter destruction. II. THAT ALL THE OBJECTS WHICH PHILOSOPHY VAINLY ATTEMPTED WERE EFFECTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED IN CHRIST. 1. What does Paul mean by philosophy? Some say heathen as opposed to Christian philosophy; others that particular system that prevailed at Colossæ—the Gnostic. Every one would say false and not true, yours and not mine. There must be some way of deciding this question. The apostle decides for us. (1) By what he says of the system he opposes. By philosophy he means systems of that nature. This system undertook to determine *a priori* and from the principles of reason. (a) The nature of God, or of absolute Being. (b) His relation to the world, or what the world was in relation to Him. (c) What the origin, nature, and destiny of man. (d) What Christ is, and how he effects the restoration of man. (2) By the arguments he uses against it. He includes in philosophy every system against which those arguments legitimately bear. (a) He argues that these are matters about which, from the nature of the case, we can know nothing. They are matters of revelation (1 Cor. ii. 9–11; John i. 18). (b) He shows that God in the Scriptures has declared the wisdom of this world to be folly (1 Cor. i. 20). (c) Experience has proved that the world by wisdom knows not God. (d) God has determined to save man not by philosophy, but by the gospel. 2. Paul does not depreciate reason. The senses have their sphere; so has reason, but there is a supernatural or spiritual sphere into which reason cannot enter. We might as well judge of a syllogism by the tongue. This conclusion is sustained by consciousness. What do you know? There lies the grave! Where does it lead to? 3. We see, therefore, that Paul by philosophy does not mean—(1) Exclusively the Oriental philosophy; for what he says here he says to the Corinthians. (2) Not natural, mental, or moral philosophy. (3) But any attempt to solve the great problems above mentioned *a priori*. III. ALL THAT PHILOSOPHY VAINLY PRETENDS TO DO IS DONE IN CHRIST. 1. As to knowledge. That is necessary, even of these supreme problems. In Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and He is the only source of knowledge. The knowledge He gives is sure, satisfying, sanctifying. 2. Redemption. (1) It is objective—pardon, reconciliation. This is accomplished by Christ's atoning work. (2) It is subjective—delivery from inward sin and restoration of Divine life. This Christ does because in Him dwells the fulness of the Godhead, &c. We are filled with God in Him. 3. Restoration to our former status, to the kingdom of light: it is exaltation. This is done by being made partakers of the glory of Christ. 4. All this depends on our union with Him, which is—(1) Representative. (2) Spiritual. (3) Voluntary, by faith. Lessons: 1. We must not trust to our own reason or to that of others for instruction in these great points. 2. We have sure knowledge in the gospel, and to reject it is certain perdition. (C. Hodge, D.D.) *Ye are complete in Him*:—1. Christ is the one infallible Teacher of the Church. Elsewhere you tread on the deceptive sand or treacherous marsh which by an appearance of solidity lures you to proceed and then sinks under your weight. His teaching alone places you on the rock. Ancient mariners sailed by the light of the stars, but when clouds intervened they were beset with dangers. Taking the words of Jesus you shall cross the sea of life with safety, but if you allow human philosophy, tradition, priesthoods, &c., to intervene, your course must be perilous. 2. He is the Head of the Church, and alone has a right to command in spiritual things. We honour the Fathers, love the names of saints and reformers, but we must not make them lords. "One is your Master." (1) The constitution of His Person qualifies Him for this spiritual throne. Divine knowledge, wisdom, power, dwell in Him, united to tenderest human sympathies. (2) Moreover He purchased us with His own blood, and His people are made willing subjects by the power of His Spirit. 3. The spiritual increase of the Church is derived from Him. Religious progress is a growing up into Him in all things. Christ is our life. Reject Him, and you are cast forth as a severed branch and burned; but united to Him a Divine virtue shall pass into your soul, and you shall be made "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

4. These things being so, the teaching that has a tendency to draw us away from Christ is to be rejected. The apostle warns the Colossians against errors which would have this effect. The things he names are still in the world under different forms, and his advice is as needful as ever. They were in danger from—I. **PHILOSOPHY.** 1. St. Paul does not speak against love of knowledge, for this is as natural as the desire for food. Nor did he suppose that the gospel had anything to fear from it. False religions may thrive in ignorance as bats in the dark, but pure Christianity, like the eagle, delights to look the sun in the face. Be philosophers if you will, explore the wonders of nature, and the gospel will no more suffer than the finding of new planets will extinguish the sun. 2. But the Colossian philosophy was the vain and bewildering theories of men. Speculations concerning God are of little value, for He is found not by our searching, but by his revealing, and that in Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead. Extinguish this light and hold in your hand the torch of philosophy, and what do you make of the black expanse before you—the many gods of the heathen, the no-God of the atheist, the blind necessity of the fatalist, or nothing but matter with the materialist, or nothing but God with the pantheist? 3. Three things are certain. (1) Man must have a religion. (2) He cannot discover a satisfying one by himself. (3) He should receive thankfully that provided by Christ, who is our life and in whom we are complete. II. **THE TRADITIONS OF MEN.** 1. By tradition we mean doctrine, precept, custom not named in the Word of God. Jewish traditions, embodied in the Talmud, were mingled at Colossæ with mental philosophy and the truths of the gospel. This Paul regarded as injurious to spiritual life. 2. The belief in tradition is not extinct. The Greek and Roman Churches receive it as a rule of faith co-ordinate with the Bible. And other Churches, more pure and enlightened, are not entirely free. (1) There are traditional systems of spiritual truth. Men of other days melted the Divine doctrines and cast them in human moulds. The gospel bears the same relation to these forms as a painting to its frame. We may change the frame, but must not efface a single feature of the picture. (2) There is a traditional mode of speech with which you must clothe the truth or be suspected of heresy. 3. Tradition is at best an uncertain guide. It may be a pillar of fire, or an *ignis fatuus*. But we have the words of Jesus, the glorious and everlasting gospel; and our faith should rest in that, and not in fairy tales of Jewish, Roman, or Protestant tradition. “Ye are complete in Him.” III. **THE SACRED RITES AND SEASONS OF A FORMER DISPENSATION** (ver. 16). Many are still Jewish in their feelings. 1. To many the Lord’s day is still the Jewish Sabbath. Yet its very name shows it to be a different day, and can we fear for its sanctity while we regard it as commemorative of the resurrection. Moreover, it is necessary for rest and devotion. Keep it, then, as given, not by Moses, but by Christ. 2. Baptism as set forth in the New Testament is beautiful and instructive. It acknowledges our sinfulness, symbolizes the purification of the Spirit, and puts a seal on the baptized that he belongs to Christ. But when it is regarded as regenerative, and as creating a relation which it only recognizes, the sign is mistaken for the thing signified, and a simple ordinance converted into a fruitful error. 3. The Lord’s Supper, in its simplicity, is an impressive representation of Christ’s sufferings, a vivid expression of His love, an historical evidence for the gospel. Men have built monuments to keep their names in human memory, but time has blotted them out. Therefore our Saviour ordained for His memorials productions of nature that will last as long as the world. Penetrate their meaning, and you will understand what Christ is to you. But when the idea of spiritual magic is introduced, instead of being helpful to piety, it becomes a stumbling-block and an offence. IV. **THE WORSHIP OF ANGELS** (ver. 18). This old error still lives. The honour paid by Rome to angels exceeds that paid to Christ. It was an error to think that we in England had done with her for ever. She is very busy in this land, and wherever her teaching is received angels are worshipped. We should avoid her and repudiate her claims. Begone, spirit of error; that we may behold God in Jesus Christ. We are “complete in Him.” (*T. Jones, D.D.*) *Complete in Christ*:—“Complete” is carried on from ver. 9. “The fulness of the Godhead,” “and ye are full (same word) in Him.” I. **FULNESS IN CHRIST.** If you had heard Christ speak you would have said nothing can be taken away or added to those words without diminishing their force or beauty. If you had seen Christ act you would have felt that His action came up to the fulness of which that action was capable. His heart was nothing but love; and His work, although confined to a few years, fulfilled the infinite counsel of the Trinity. The Father looked down and saw no flaw and was satisfied. II. **THIS FULNESS**

WAS TO BE THE ONE TREASURE-HOUSE OF THE CHURCH FOR EVER (John i. 16; Eph. iv. 7). And every believer being separately endowed, the whole Church is made His body, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." So we are filled, complete; and the Church is the complement of Jesus. III. THE PROCESS BY WHICH THE COMPLETENESS IS EFFECTED IS UNION WITH CHRIST. 1. The union is a simple, positive fact once for all. The Holy Spirit enters a man's mind and unites his thoughts, feelings, desires, &c., with those of Christ, and that Spirit in both is union. 2. If there be union the completeness will follow, just as a vessel must fill itself from the fountain with which it is connected. IV. WE NATURALLY YEARN AND STRIVE FOR COMPLETENESS, BUT FAIL EVERYWHERE. 1. No man ever yet came up to the point of which he knew his powers were capable. 2. None of those sources of gratification with which God has furnished us ever gave entire satisfaction. 3. There is not a man who has not his weak points; but above all men the Christian feels his incompleteness. The better he prays the more he feels his prayer deficient. The higher his attainments the farther off he seems from what he wants. And no Christian friend, no Church, no ordinance, no grace, is all he once expected they would be. 4. Life is one vast incompleteness. V. WE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM. 1. From His cross our Lord said "It is finished." From the time of creation down to that hour those words could not have been spoken about any human undertaking. But He said it, and mark the consequence. You have to do with a salvation which is perfectly complete. If you think you are to do anything you detract from the completeness of Christ. 2. We have a twofold completeness. (1) That which we draw from Christ. The whole disposal of God's gifts is delegated to Christ. In Him all things are treasured up for our sakes. Hence He will supply (a) our temporal needs. The Christian, therefore, must not be anxious about them. (b) Strength and wisdom for every work we have to do. The Christian, then, must not despair about his weakness and ignorance. (c) Grace for Christian growth and comfort. The Christian must not despond when deprived of outward means and help. (2) That in which we stand in Christ. God sees all who believe in Christ, and accepts Christ for them. Hence everything we do in faith loses itself in some corresponding thing that Christ has done. Our prayer, *e.g.*, mingles with Christ's intercession. What is wanting He supplies, what is redundant He deducts. His perfume gives it sweetness, and so it goes to the throne, how different from when it left us, "complete." He is "made unto us wisdom and righteousness," &c. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Complete in Christ*:—1. Every valuable mechanism represents a principle peculiar to itself. It may have many important adjuncts, but there must be one principle which imparts its force to all the rest. 2. In the same manner men are of large or small account as they recognize their individuality. Each stone is hewed for its special place, and to fail to appreciate our purpose is to degrade our manhood and to insult the prescience of the Divine Architect. 3. The claim of Christianity to be is that it, in like manner, embodies one distinctive fact. Ethically considered it has much in common with other systems; but its central feature or force is, as its name indicates, the Christ element. The degree in which Christ is present in the heart marks the purity of the Christianity. 4. The declaration, "Ye are complete in Him," goes much further than the recognition of Christ as an historic character as we associate Mahomet with Islam, &c. It is Christ interpenetrating Christianity at every point. The Scriptures assert for Christ comprehensive, all-filling character and capacities. "I am the Way," &c. "Without Me ye can do nothing." "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead," &c. Observe—I. THIS COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST IN CONTRAST WITH ALL OTHERS. 1. No life is or can be in itself alone. We sustain a multitude of important relations, family, civil, &c., but it would not be possible to apply the language of the text to them. Of no relation, even the most valuable, can it be said, "This is essential." It seems to be the destiny of man to grow out of existing states, and use them only as the oar employs the water that it dips as a leverage for progress. And we may thank God that in a world where death spares nothing that there is no person or condition wherein our completeness lies. The king, hero, father dies; the nation, community, family mourns as if nature had stopped in its courses; but to-morrow the world moves on unchanged save that one grave more has furrowed its surface. That any of us is essential to the place he occupies is but a fiction of his own weakness or a flattering adulation of his admirers. Only in God all things consist. 2. The reason of this, and as marking the essential difference between our relations to any other and to Christ, is that the former are in a sense conventional.

We found them, we have become habituated to them, nevertheless they are not essential. Of one only can this be said. That we are complete in Christ renders necessary the preceding declaration which shows that what God can do for us Christ can do. II. THAT WE ARE COMPLETE IN CHRIST NECESSARILY IMPLIES THAT APART FROM HIM WE HAVE NO MORAL STANDING PLACE. 1. I care not to argue the question of degrees. Incompleteness where perfection is demanded, where the judgment is by an infinitely holy standard, is as condemnatory and destructive of our moral basis as any degree of sin. Some years ago a large object glass was prepared for a telescope. With all the care employed, a single defective spot was found upon the otherwise perfect lens. It was not broken, there was no flaw, but it was condemned. Its purpose was to be a clear undeviating eye turned towards the heavens accurately to determine localities, &c. That single imperfection was its entire condemnation. This is the idea of human depravity. The defect in the web of the cloth renders the whole piece unmarketable. Slight incompleteness is still incompleteness, and when the judgment is upon righteousness the ground is taken from our feet. 2. It would be curious to investigate by what process so many coolly conclude to risk the great ordeal upon their personal moral standing, which even their fellow-men pronounce defective. A principle that may well command this easy-going complacency to halt is that the nature of sincere virtue is ever discontent with attainments. As eminence with the pencil or chisel leads to the detection of manifold deficiencies and desire for a higher ideal, so the advance towards holiness, instead of satisfying, always reveals a disheartening lack, and as invariably leads to a search for some other mode of satisfying the requirement of conscience. 3. May it not be that this failure to perceive our own incompleteness, and the necessity of a better justifying righteousness, is rather to be ascribed to moral blindness than accepted as an evidence of superior virtue? For if once our incompleteness out of Christ be admitted, then the neglect to obey the gospel is reduced to a childish trifling with our eternal interest. 4. Yet how can one more fully commend the completeness there is in Christ than to point to that spotless life consummated by the sacrificial death of the cross? For all the way through—where the suffering by innocence must either mean injustice on the part of God, or justice receiving satisfaction for us—there is not a step or act which is not eloquent with the perfection of that sacrifice. You are asked to trust a Saviour of whom it is asked, "Who is he that condemneth," &c. Here is your completeness. It pleads no weak abandonment by God of His holiness. Redemption in Christ is the crown of that holiness as it is the expression of God's love.

III. THIS COMPLETENESS GATHERS IN THE CIRCLE OF ITS EMBRACE EVERY CONSCIOUS WANT. It keeps as well as saves. Christ's intercessory prayer is not a supplication such as we offer, but a claim and recapitulation of what had been secured by His expiation. And in virtue of that Christ will bring with Him His saints, and stand at heaven's gates claiming for them admission by His victory over the grave. Christ's completeness must be one which does not exhaust itself on a past forgiveness. It must not only cleanse, but keep me clean. 2. The independence of God of every human condition, for the success of Christ's kingdom, and the completeness for all its requirements, is found in Christ. Men have come and gone; some have seemed so important that hope almost expired in their departure, as Melancthon felt when Luther died. Yet how local are all such influences. God uses men, and so do we; but even with us how inconsiderable is a man. How quickly is the gap filled. God's Church is not complete in man, but in Christ. (*E. P. Terhune, D.D.*)

*Christians complete in Christ:—*I. WHAT IS MEANT BY CHRISTIANS BEING COMPLETE? 1. The word means "full, wanting nothing"; and as applied to Christians, it means that they have everything necessary for life and godliness, happiness and immortality. 2. The things needed in order to being complete. (1) Wisdom and knowledge—meeting natural ignorance of, and conflicting theories about, God and the way of salvation. (2) Pardon and righteousness. As sinners men cannot stand before God in judgment. They are unclean in His sight, and without forgiveness and acceptance they must perish. (3) Holiness and purity. The heart is naturally evil, and by habit and indulgence acquires strength for evil. Unless this is cleansed there can be no meetness for heaven. (4) Consolation and peace. Forgiveness is not enough, there must be a consciousness of it, so that the sense of shame, the deepest of our discomforts, may be banished, and the sense of reconciliation with God take its place. (5) Support and strength in view of trials, labours, enemies. (6) Deliverance from the power of death and the grave.

II. HOW CHRISTIANS BECOME COMPLETE. "In Christ," Because being God and

man all fulness dwells in Him, and out of this fulness all our need is supplied. 1. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." By His Word He instructs, by His providence He guides, and by His Spirit He opens the mind to instruct both. 2. "He is the propitiation for our sins," and has thus brought in an everlasting righteousness, by means of which believers are accepted. 3. His grace creates the heart anew, subdues sin, and developes in holiness. 4. He brings peace to the troubled conscience and consolation to the broken heart. 5. He is the strength, defence, and support of His people. 6. He hath abolished death. (*E. Cooper, M.A.*) *Believers complete in Christ*:—I. ON EARTH. 1. In their union to Christ. 2. In their justification. 3. In Christ's fulness. 4. In their title to heaven. II. IN HEAVEN. 1. As regards their persons—the union of body and soul with the perfection of nature and grace. 2. As regards their mental faculties—in receptivity and memory. 3. As regards the graces of the Spirit—faith lost to sight, hope in fruition, love in God. 4. As regards their fellowship—undivided, uninterrupted, with our predecessors, contemporaries, followers, God. 5. As regards their happiness—perfect enjoyment, perfect service. (*A. Fletcher, D.D.*) *Completed life*:—We are to look to Christ alone. I. FOR THE FREEING OF OUR SPIRIT FROM ALL EVIL. But how shall this great purification and perfecting be attained? The appeal is to Omnipotent Grace. And God's response is made known in Jesus Christ: "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" of pardoning and cleansing grace. In Him "who is the head of all principality and power" are we to look for the sin-expelling force—the force to correct, to purify our deepest life. 1. And we must not call in any foreign aid; we are "complete in Him." These Colossians were tempted by Gentile philosophy on one side, and Jewish ecclesiasticism on the other, but the apostle reminds them that everything they wanted was in Christ, and they were to confine themselves severely to His fellowship. 2. And Christ can save us completely. "Whiter than snow." Let us remember that Christ aims at our "completeness," and let us not rest short of that ideal. It is a present blessing. II. FOR THE PERFECTING OF OUR NATURE IN ALL ITS POWERS. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." In Christ we behold the fulness of "the Godhead bodily," and also the fulness of humanity. 1. We need not travel beyond Christ—He is the ideal and the perfecter of the race. All colours are in the sun, and all the infinite differentiations of colour found on the landscapes of nature, in the vapours of the firmament, in the play of the sea—all are in the light. And in Jesus we have the full-orbed humanity, all the graces by which man can be adorned. When we study the character of ordinary men it is like entering an ordinary garden, in which are a few fair flowers with an unfortunate admixture of weeds; when we study the moral character of extraordinary men it is like entering the grounds of some great rose-grower or orchid connoisseur—many delightful things greeting our eyes. But on beholding Christ, it is like being set down in Kew Gardens, where the vegetation of the whole earth blooms. In these days certain critics are very anxious to send us to the sacred writings of China, India, Arabia, Persia. Very valuable indeed are those writings from certain points of view, but they have nothing to add to the ideal of humanity given in Christ. 2. In Christ we are to attain the perfection of our nature. We have not only completeness in Him, but we are to become complete in Him. Men talk about the narrowness of Christianity, its commandments and prohibitions; they want a system of religion, wider, freer. Now, the tree on the heath or in the street may rebel against the iron bars which girdle it. Says the grumbling sapling, "I don't like this iron cage; I want liberty, I want room." Room! it has plenty of room at the top. It has room for its branches to stir with every wind of heaven, to catch all the dew of the morning, all the light of the sun, all the wealth of the shower; room for the singing birds, room to leaf, to blossom, to fruit. Room! The iron bars protect you from beneath, but a whole sky is waiting for you up above. So, whilst the New Testament rings us round with protective prohibitions, Jesus Christ stands over us like a sky, pouring down upon us richest influence, and drawing forth all the powers of our nature to their fullest perfection. There is room for our whole personality, our bodily instincts, mental faculties, imagination, wit, judgment, logic, speculation; for our social instincts, all the sensibilities of kinship, friendship, patriotism; for our ethical sense, for our heart with all its wealth of affection. Christianity is not wide enough for a theatre at one end and a prize ring at the other, but wide enough for whatever is true and pure in knowledge, science, art, pleasure, patriotism, business, love. We are not straitened in Christ; let us not be straitened in ourselves, but so

live in the faith of the Lord Jesus that all the riches of our nature may be realized, that we may "come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." III. FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF OUR LIFE IN ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. In Christ we attain completeness alike in spiritual and in practical virtue. Holiness is that side of goodness which looks towards God; morality is that side which looks towards society. And in both Christ perfects us—filling us with reverence, admiration, love toward God, and strengthening us to fulfil all practical virtue. 2. In Christ we attain completeness in universal virtue. If we have the Spirit of Christ, it will display itself in every possible virtue—that Spirit being the essence of universal virtue. Just as in the doctrine of the convertibility of force, we are taught that heat may become light, and light electricity, and electricity magnetism, and magnetism chemical affinity, and chemical affinity be changed into motion—one force with many manifestations—so the Spirit of Christ displays itself, now as meekness, now as courage, now as temperance, now as purity, just as circumstances require, but yet is all the time the one same Divine force. It makes of one a good master, another a good servant; one a good prince, another a good subject; one a good husband, another a good wife; one a good parent, another a good child. The Spirit of Christ fits men for every rank, adorns them with every grace. Ye "are complete in Him." Conclusion: We must feel condemned for our incompleteness; and yet from time to time how near we come to a life altogether full, rich, glorious! One of our magazines had a striking paragraph, entitled, "I have touched the gold," and it went on to relate how a diver uttered these words on coming up from a sunken gold ship, and the writer proceeded to show how in religion we often touch the gold and yet never quite realize it. Oh! how often have we touched the gold—the strength that more than overcomes, the perfect peace, the faith which asks and receives, the love that many waters cannot quench, the purity that keeps itself pure, the joy that is unspeakable, the hope full of glory—we touch the gold, we always know when we touch gold it is such a pleasant feeling, and yet fail to possess it. Let us trust in Christ with all our heart; let us do it now, so shall every man be presented perfect in Him. (*W. L. Watkinson.*)

The completing of the soul:—If we are only to be complete in Christ, then we must be incomplete without Him. It follows then that a soul after being made is still to be completed. It may be a germ to be developed, or a blasted germ to be restored. Here then is the true work of Christ's salvation, the completing of the soul. I. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE COMPLETING OF THE SOUL? 1. We constantly assume the necessity of a great afterwork to be done on the soul of our child to make it the complete man or woman we desire it to be. What we call education is only our attempt to bring it to completeness. The result is a being in higher quantity and finer quality, and of enlarged capacity for action and enjoyment. 2. But it is not to be assumed that we are right in all our conceptions of what takes place in the training of minds. (1) They will not be complete if only fully educated intellectually. Sometimes they will be hampered by scholarly attainments, drugged by great authorities, and incapacitated by the overload they have taken. Perhaps one hour with God would have done more in the widening of consciousness and the kindling of divinist fires than whole years of school drill. (2) Sometimes we think our child is only going to be complete when educated away from certain ranges of employment. If he can only be a blacksmith, or a school teacher even, we think that we have not made enough of him. Were he a qualified commander, physician, lawyer, &c., we should think him more nearly up to the measure of his possibilities. But God does not grade our completeness by any such law. He may have rated Bezaleel the brazier far above Aaron the priest. Whoever came nearer to being mated with Shakespeare than the tinker Bunyan? A great soul can be fashioned anywhere if only God is with him. God nowhere allows that souls are kept back from completeness by their employments. 3. No mere schooling, to whatever grade of life or social estimation it may lead, is any but the faintest approximation to the completion of the soul. II. HOW DOES IT APPEAR TO NEED ANY SUCH COMPLETION? If this were a question relating to Adam in his innocence, we should say that he was a full-grown, beautiful child, but yet a child; that his perceptions are all to be gotten, his will trained, habits formed, &c. Until then he is so incomplete that he will not stand fast in good, but plunge into wrong. Our first man, commonly thought so grandly perfect, is put on probation only that he may get his nature so matured in good that he will come out able to stand. Our question after this relates to him under the conditions of moral disaster into which he has fallen. 1. The soul scarcely at all answers its true end.

There is a feeling everywhere that souls are going wide of the mark. A watch is complete when it keeps time, not when it quarrels with the notations of suns and dials and almanacks. A vintage process is complete when it makes wine, not when it makes vinegar. Souls in like manner are complete when they make the good they were made for. 2. Their enjoyment is not full, but confessedly a great way short of it. Their instincts are unfulfilled, their wants unsupplied, their objects not found. They are tormented with a general unrest. It would not be so if they were complete. They would be exactly full of enjoyment, just as by their inborn necessity they crave to be. No bee misses the shape of its cells, no bird the direction of its flight, no plant the colour and kind of its flower. No more will a soul its enjoyment unless incomplete, sweltering in some torment of inbred disorder. 3. Souls do not fulfil the standards of beauty, truth, and right. These are standards we all admit, just as all flowers and fruits have standard colours and figures of their kind. An apple is not complete when it comes out a gourd; nor a rose when it comes forth blue. When a soul, then, misses its kind, and puts forth itself in deformity, falsity, and wrong, it is a witness to its incompleteness. 4. Take a more surface view, and let the question settle itself under mere first impressions. How then is it that there is so much meanness, passion, want of self-government in individuals; and so many quarrels, acts of injustice, and bloodshed in society? Who can imagine mere creatures complete in their order? Suppose all the grains in a bushel of wheat were to act on themselves and towards one another thus! And the reason why they do not do so is because they are complete creatures, resting in their own perfect mould, and in harmony with each other—they that are at the top lying just as heavily, and those at the bottom supporting the weight just as bravely as they must. Souls completed in their order would do the same, just as all God's finished worlds and societies in glory do, without one rasping of a bad thought, or pang of mutual accusation. 5. We have a way of saying concerning a man that he is ruined or blasted by his vices: in which we refer mentally to the incomplete state of the flower which we say is blasted when it does not come to fruit. And the figure is rightly chosen. Such men are incomplete. 6. It is a very curious distinction of souls that, being finite, they have yet infinite wants and aspirations; their very longing is to be completed in the outspreading of some infinite possession. What a falling short, therefore, is it when they fall short of God. III. HOW IN CHRIST THEY CAN BE MADE COMPLETE. Here we discover three great agencies provided for the purpose. 1. Inspirations. (1) Separated from God man is nothing. Existing in mere self-hood he cannot push himself out in any way so as to be complete as from himself. A sponge might as well complete itself in dry air; it must let in and possess the sea. Just so a soul must have God's properties flowing in and through—liberty and life in His life, power in His power; it must be true in His truth, righteous in His righteousness. (2) Now, it is in this inspiration force that Christ arranges for in His gift of the Spirit. He enters the soul to fill out every lack, configuring it inwardly to all that is most perfect in Himself, turning its very liberty towards all it wants and needs to receive. 2. We have ideals in Christ, who lives God in human figure and relation, so that we have in Him all that requires to be completed in us. Christ is the mirror that glasses God's image before us, and the Spirit is the plastic force within that transfers and photographs that image, so that "beholding as in an image," &c. (2 Cor. iv. 6). 3. To make the provision perfect, we are set in a various scheme of relations that we may have a training in duties and qualities, and be perfected by means of them. And we have as our remarkable advantage Christ the Divine man with us in these relations, so that trying to do the exact Christly thing in them all we are to get benefit in so many forms and degrees, and be brought when all is done and suffered to a completeness in the will of God. In this wondrous mill every blemish is to be removed, till at last there will be no spot or wrinkle or any such thing. IV. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS THE ONLY POWER ABLE TO BRING MEN THUS FORWARD. 1. We try education, getting much from it, but never anything which approaches a standard of completeness. 2. What we call self-improvement is a poor desultory affair, polishing one thing, while another goes rough by neglect, and all issuing in a great self-consciousness painful to behold, and in itself how dry. 3. We try self-government under the standards of morality, but the most we obtain is to pile up what we think good acts on one another, as a man piles his day's wages, but then they will be as dry and with as little continuity. 4. There is another way greatly praised—philosophy. But its ideals are for ever out-running its possible attainments, and the fine philosophic

consciousness will be only a kind of equilibrium under dryness and felt limitation. And the wars of the mind are perhaps kenneled by it but not composed. 5. There is nothing, in short, but religion that can be looked to for the completing of the soul; because as nothing else does—(1) It takes hold of the soul's eternity and its sin, to raise up, harmonize, purify, and settle it in a rest of everlasting equilibrium in God. (2) It takes hold of all possible conditions, completing as truly the menial as the employer, the unlettered as the scholar. (3) It completes one degree of capacity as certainly as another, preparing the feeblest to fill out his measure as roundly and blissfully as the highest. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *Every need of man supplied in Christ*:—I. THE ERRORS PAUL DESIRES TO COUNTERACT. These were the current "philosophy" of the day. There were many forms of thought which preceded Christianity. For hundreds of years men had been indulging in speculation, groping after light, and weaving systems; and the Colossian philosophy seems to have been an amalgamation of the four principal. 1. The philosophy of Plato, with its mystic doctrine of everything having an archetypal model. 2. Jewish fables and endless genealogies picked up by the exiles in Babylon. 3. Ceremonialism and the observing of days, &c. 4. Gnosticism, the affectation of superior knowledge.

II. THE DOCTRINE WITH WHICH HE WOULD COUNTERACT THESE ERRORS. "Ye are complete in Him." 1. Note who and what Christ is. The glory of Christ is set over against these speculations. (1) He possesses the loftiest ideal—"All the fulness of the Godhead," not one of His emanations, and that fulness "bodily," brought within the comprehension of man. 2. He has done a great work (chap. i. 20). It is not matter that is sinful, but man, and from this Christ redeems him. (3) He sustains a glorious relation to the universe (chap. i. 15, 18; ii. 19). He is not one of an illustrious order, but Creator and Head of all. 4. He maintains a close union to the man who accepts Him (chap. i. 27). 2. If Christ is all this to a man, then that man is complete in Him. (1) If a man be striving after the knowledge of God, he is complete in Christ. This has been the problem of philosophy from Thales till now. What is the first principle? Water, air, fire, mind, love, have each in turn been the answer. And now a "philosophy" is confessing the problem insoluble, calling God by a name more hopeless than that on the Athenian altar—the Unknowable. But who that knows Christ can ever be thus in the dark (John xiv. 9). (2) If a man would approach God he is complete in Christ. Afar from God man cannot rest, but sin keeps him away. But through Christ we have access (John xiv. 6; Heb. x. 19) and close fellowship. (3) If a man is anxious about his standing before God he is complete in Christ. Through Him we may have a better and firmer one than Adam's. In Christ a man stands accepted and welcomed with nought wanting to the fulness of his redemption. (4) If a man wants to lead a holy life he is complete in Christ. This was the aim of the Gnostics; not holiness indeed, but freedom from the impurities of matter. Hence they tried asceticism. But sin is not to be purged by scourging the body. Christ however can kill it by the power of a new life which His Spirit implants. (5) If a man is longing for light on the great questions of destiny he is complete in Christ, who has brought life and immortality to light. (6) Do we ask for a bond of brotherhood in the human race? We are complete in Christ in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, &c. (7) Do we ask for a redemption that shall perfect body, as well as soul and spirit? We are complete in Him who is "the Saviour of the body" and "the resurrection and the life." III. THE SUITABILITY OF THIS DOCTRINE FOR COUNTERACTING MODERN ERRORS. The true method of meeting false doctrine is to show that all our nature craves is to be found in Christ. But since Christ is enough in Himself He must be accepted as being so, and not as the mere complement of some other system. 1. Are you in peril of Rationalism? Learn what Jesus is, and you will find reason and conscience to say, "Here is one at whose feet we can sit to be their enlightener and lord." 2. Are you attracted by Positivism? Here in Christ is all that is attractive in its assertions, and nought of its dismal negations. They worship they know not what in worshipping "Humanity." But no one who has ever caught a glimpse of Christ can ever barter a living Saviour for that. One in the race and yet over it. Over it, that He might redeem, educate, and glorify it; and yet who can give to each member eternal life. 3. Do the claims of a so-called priesthood attract you? If you knew what Christ is you would let no one have the impertinence to come between you and Him. We need a mediator between God and man; but none between us and Jesus. Conclusion: This doctrine is grand enough for the philosopher, yet simple enough for us all. We are complete in Christ for living or dying; for time or eternity. (C.

Clemance, D.D.) Completely furnished.—Manton says "He that is in a journey to heaven must be provided for all weathers : for though it be sunshine when he first sets forth, a storm will overtake him before he cometh to his journey's end." Have faith in Christ and you are ready for anything, thankful for everything, afraid of nothing. "Ye are complete in him." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) Which is the head of all principality and power.—*Angels*.—I. IN THEMSELVES. For their excellency of nature, as they are here called principalities, so elsewhere they are called "stars of the morning," "sons of God," yea, "Gods." II. IN RELATION TO CHRIST so they are implied to be of the body, and Christ to be their Head. Now we may not marvel at it, that Christ should be the head of angels, for there be divers distinct benefits, which angels from thence do receive, which by natural creation they had not. 1. They are vouchsafed a place in the mystical body under Christ, that they might be received, as it were into the new order in Christ. 2. A peace is made between them and man in Christ. 3. The room of angels fallen is supplied by the elect, the society of angels being much maimed by their fall. 4. They are refreshed with singular joy for the conversion of the elect; besides the enlarging of their knowledge, that they are vouchsafed the understanding of the secrets of the gospel. 5. They receive from Christ confirming grace, and so assurance that they shall never fall : which is their chief benefit. 6. Their obedience in its own nature is imperfect, though not sinful, and therefore may need to be covered by Christ's perfections. III. IN RELATION TO THE BODY OF CHRIST. 1. They are like masters and tutors, to whom the great King of heaven sends out His children to nurse. God doth adopt children, and after commit them to be kept by those most noble citizens of heaven. 2. They execute judgment upon the enemies of the Church. They attend us at the hour of death, and carry our souls to heaven. They shall gather our bodies together at the last day. 3. For the accomplishment of all designments for our good, they stand always looking on the face of God to receive commandments. Conclusion : Inasmuch as Christ is the head of all principalities and powers, we may comfort ourselves divers ways. 1. If Christ fill the angels, how much more can He out of His fulness fill us in the supply of all our wants. 2. Shall we not rejoice in the grace here is done to us, in that we are united into communion with angels under our Head? yea, and that such glorious creatures, are appointed to be our attendants, why should we fear when Christ and His angels will be so ready about us. 3. This may also instruct us, we need not be ashamed of Christ's service, seeing the very angels follow Him and depend upon Him. A prince that kept great princes to be his domestic servants, were like to be much sought to for preferment of such as would follow him. Oh! how should we long after Christ who is Head over such glorious creatures as the angels are! (*N. Byfield.*)

Vers. 11-12. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.—*Christian circumcision*.—I. IS INWARD AND SPIRITUAL. II. IS COMPLETE. Manual circumcision was the cutting away of only a small part of the flesh. But the spiritual circumcision consists in putting off the whole body of our corrupt nature—the entire fleshly principle. III. IS DIVINE. "By the circumcision of Christ." It is wrought, without hands, by the inward power of the Divine Spirit of Christ. IV. IS REALIZED BY THE THOROUGH IDENTIFICATION OF THE BELIEVER WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. V. IS BROUGHT IN THE SOUL BY A SPIRITUAL BAPTISM. "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him." VI. IS RECEIVED BY FAITH. "Through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." Faith is not a natural product of the human heart. It is a Divine gift, bestowed on man by a Divine operation. (*G. Barlow.*) *The circumcision of Christ*.—I. EVERY REAL CHRISTIAN HAS EXPERIENCED THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION. The argument is that circumcision was unnecessary, since the Colossians had undergone the new birth which it signified. 1. It is spiritual, and plainly distinguished from that which was made with hands. The idea was not a novel one (*Deut. x. 16, xxx. 6; Jer. ix. 26; Ezek. xlv. 7; Acts vii. 51; Rom. ii. 28-29*). 2. The true character of the operation is the putting off of the body of the flesh, "the old man," corrupt human nature, with all its carnal instincts and tendencies. Manual circumcision cut off only a small part of the flesh, the spiritual is an entire transformation of the whole man. Old habits are abandoned, evil associations forsaken, and the soul is ushered into a new life, with new thoughts, affections, &c. It is a putting on of the new man. 3. It is Divine, "the circumcision of Christ," ordained and communicated by Him, with Him for its author and model. II. THIS TRUE CIRCUMCISION IS REALIZED ONLY IN UNION WITH CHRIST IN

HIS DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION. 1. The Saviour died for us, and when the anxious sinner trusts Christ he is regarded as having died with Him. 2. The reality of death is evinced by burial, and the death of the believer with Christ is the casting off of the body of the flesh. The old man is sepulchred. 3. The soul in regeneration arises with Christ to a new and holy life. III. THIS UNION IS REALIZED IN THE BAPTISM. It is generally assumed that the allusion here is to immersion. 1. But it is difficult to see any resemblance between this and the depositing of Christ's body in a rock-hewn sepulchre. The reference is to the baptism of the Spirit—the washing of regeneration (1 Cor. xii. 13, cf. 1 Cor. i. 14). The theory of immersion is that it is the profession of a regeneration which has already taken place; but with St. Paul the burial and resurrection are coincident with the baptism. It is quite possible to die and rise with Christ without water baptism, but not without the baptism of the Spirit. 2. Why does Paul speak disparagingly of "hand-wrought" circumcision, and proclaim its needlessness, if he is to pass immediately to speak of the efficacy of "hand-wrought" baptism? To introduce that would be to introduce the very element of ceremonialism which he is denouncing. IV. THE PRINCIPLE THROUGH WHICH THIS SPIRITUAL BAPTISM IS RECEIVED—"through faith." 1. It is surprising that so many should regard the baptism in which the disciple is said to rise with Christ as that of water. No one is raised out of water by faith, but by the arms which immersed him. The baptism of the Spirit is received by faith; an unbeliever cannot receive it. 2. "In the operation of God" does not mean that that is the origin but the object of faith. If I believe in the power that raised Christ, I believe in the power which has accepted His suretyship for me. This faith regards Christ's resurrection as the keystone of Christianity, the centre of confidence, the only basis of hope. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The true circumcision* :—There are two tendencies ever at work to corrupt religion. One is of the intellect, the temptation of the cultured few, which turns religion into theological speculation; the other of the senses, that of the vulgar many, which turns religion into a theatrical spectacle. But opposite as these are they were united at Colossæ. To the teaching of the necessity of circumcision—I. The apostle opposes the position that ALL CHRISTIAN MEN BY VIRTUE OF THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST HAVE RECEIVED THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION, of which the outward rite was the shadow, and therefore now obsolete. 1. The language points to a definite past time. When they became Christians a change passed over them parabled by circumcision. (1) It is not made with hands, i.e., it is not a rite but a reality, not transacted in the flesh but in the spirit, not a removal of ceremonial impurity, but a cleansing of the heart (Deut. xxi. 6). (2) It consists in the putting off of the body of the flesh—"the sins of" is an interpolation—a complete stripping off from oneself, as of clothes, in contrast with a removal of a small part of the body. It is true that Christian men, alas! realize this by slow degrees; but on the Divine side it is complete. Christ gives perfect emancipation, and if it is only partial it is because we have not taken the things that are freely given. The foe may keep up a guerilla warfare after he is substantially defeated, but his entire subjugation is certain if we keep hold of the strength of Christ. (3) It is of Christ; not that He submitted to it, but instituted it. 2. What is the bearing of this statement on the apostle's purpose? That circumcision is an anachronism, "as if a flower should shut, and be a bud again." (1) The true centre of gravity, of Christianity, then, is in moral transformation. Surely Christ who gives men a new life by union with Himself by faith has delivered man from the "yoke of bondage," if He has done anything at all. How far away from Paul's conception, then, are those which busy themselves with punctilios of observance! But the hatred of forms may be as completely a form as the most elaborate ritual. We need to have our eyes turned away to the far higher thing, the service of the transformed nature. (2) The conquest of the animal nature is the certain outcome of union with Christ and that alone. Paul did not regard matter as evil, as the Colossian teachers did, nor the body as the source of all sin. But he knew that the fiercest temptations came from it, and that the foulest stains upon the conscience were splashed from the mud which it threw. It is a matter of life and death to find some means of taming the animal that is in us all. We all know of wrecked lives which have been driven on the rocks by the wild passions of the flesh; and when we come to add its weaknesses, limitations, and needs, and remember how high purposes are frustrated by its shrinking from toil, and how often mists born from its undrained swamps darken the vision of truth and God, we do not need to be Gnostics to believe that goodness requires the flesh to be subdued. But no asceticisms or resolves will do what we want.

Much repression may be effected by force of will, but it is like a man holding a wolf by the jaws. The arms begin to ache and the grip to grow slack, and he feels his strength ebbing, and knows that as soon as he lets go the brute will be at his throat. Nothing tames the wild beast in us but Christ. He binds it in a silken lash, and that gentle constraint is strong because the fierceness is gone. Christianity would be easy were it a round of observances. Anybody can fast or wear a hair shirt, but the putting off of the body of the flesh is a harder thing. Emotion, theology, ceremonial, may have their value, but a religion that includes them all and leaves out the subjugation of the flesh is worthless. If we are in Christ we shall not live in the flesh. II. Paul meets the false teaching by a reference to CHRISTIAN BAPTISM AS BEING THE CHRISTIAN SIGN OF THE INWARD CHANGE. 1. The form of expression in the Greek implies that the circumcision and burial with Christ in baptism are contemporaneous. You have been baptized—does not that express all that circumcision meant and more? (1) This reference is quite consistent with the subordinate importance of ritual. Some forms are necessary to a visible Church, and Christ has given us two: one symbolizing the initial spiritual act of Christian life, and the other the constantly repeated process of Christian nourishment. (2) The form here presupposed is immersion. (3) There are but two theories: the one is that baptism effects the change, and elevates it into more than the importance of which Paul sought to deprive circumcision, confuses the distinction between the Church and the world, lulls men into a false security, obscures the central truth of Christianity that faith makes a Christian, gives the basis for a portentous sacerdotalism, and is shivered to pieces against the plain facts of daily life. But it is conclusively disposed of by the words, "through faith in the operation," &c. What remains, then, but that baptism is associated with the change, because in the Divine order it is meant to be its outward symbol? 2. Note the thoroughness of the change. It is more than a circumcision; it is burial and resurrection. (1) We partake of Christ's death inasmuch as—(a) we ally ourselves to it by our faith as the sacrifice for our sins; (b) by the power of His Cross we are drawn to slay our old nature, dying to the habits, desires, &c., in which we lived. (2) If we are thus made conformable to His death, we shall know the power of His resurrection. (a) It will be a guarantee of our own. (b) The seal of His perfect work on the Cross, and shall know it as a token of God's acceptance; (c) the type of our spiritual resurrection now. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) Buried with Him.—*The believer's identification with Christ*:—It was with St. Paul a principle that the whole Christian life is a following of the blessed steps of one holy life, an imitation of Christ. We are in Him—I. CONCEIVED AND BORN (Gal. iv. 19). II. CRUCIFIED (Gal. ii. 20; Rom. vi. 5). III. DEAD (Rom. vi. 3, vii. 4; cf. 1 Pet. iv. 1). IV. BURIED (Rom. vi. 4). V. RISEN (Rom. vi. 5; Col. iii. 1). VI. ASCENDED AND REIGNING (Eph. ii. 4-6). What is done or suffered by Him historically is done in us analogously and mystically now, and will be completed historically and actually hereafter. This is the underlying principle of the order of the Christian year. (*Bishop Alexander.*)

Vers. 13, 14. And you being dead in your sins.—Spiritual death:—I. TO WHAT EXTENT AND TO WHAT PERSONS THIS CONDITION APPLIES. 1. The terms of the text include Jews and Gentiles. The Jews were spiritually dead notwithstanding the ordinance of circumcision; the Gentiles in their uncircumcision. The great error of Judaism as the rabbis made it was to mistake religious ordinances for religion; equally fatal is the same error in its pseudo-Christian shape. 2. It is clear that this state is not predicated of heathen and profligates only; it is the normal condition in which men are born, and in which they live and die without grace. This is clear from chap. i. 13; Matt. 21, 22; John vi. 53-63; 1 John iii. 14. 3. Whatever privileges of pious parentage, godly training, gospel ministrations, &c., we may have been favoured, over and above these we "must be born again." II. **SOME OF THE PARTICULARS INVOLVED IN THIS CONDITION.** In death is implied—1. Deprivation—there is something lost. We do not say that a stone is dead, it never lived. Hence the view of a stone on the highway excites no emotion or sympathy; but how different with regard to a dead bird, much more a dead man or a dead friend. Once there was spiritual life in man. He was made a living soul; now he is dead in trespasses and sins, having lost it. And yet how strange that the spectacle of this most terrible of deaths scarcely moves us. 2. Corruption. Life has its degrees: vegetable, animal, rational, but in death there are no degrees; all the dead are equally corrupt. There are differences in the sight of man, comparing

man with man; there are some better characters than others, of more natural virtue, and society owes them reverence; but society was not our maker and is not our judge. This reflection should humble us. "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" 3. Helplessness. "A living dog is better than a dead lion," who is as incapable as his own shadow. The dead soul is equally helpless; without foreign aid it must lie like the tree where it has fallen. Spiritual life must be communicated before the soul can move. 4. Resurrection. The decayed vegetable dies, but to be reproduced in another form. Every falling leaf that strews the earth in autumn with the silent evidences of the fall of man, seems to catch a whisper from the breeze, "Thou shalt rise again." So when man dies the principle of his existence is not destroyed but withdrawn. But, alas for the soul that has lain in the death of sin before the body has reached the grave; that shall indeed rise again, but "to shame and everlasting contempt." (*J. B. Owen, M.A.*) *The dead soul*:—The dead, as insusceptible as their kindred dust, cannot be won back to the activities of life. No voice reaches them, no spectacle arouses them, no terror seizes them. The analogies of death in souls spiritually dead are full of painful truth. They are insensible to the attractions and momentousness of Divine and eternal realities. They are not touched by that which is tender in Divine love nor awed by that which is terrible in Divine law. Alienation from God ever produces spiritual callousness. With an eye to discern sensible beauty in the marvels of creation and the triumphs of art, there is no perception of the grander beauties of holiness, no apprehension of the character and glory of the Almighty. With an ear to hear and a taste to appreciate the rich harmonies of sound, and the eloquence of human tongues, there is no ear to hear the voice of God or the whisperings of His gracious Spirit, the only true and saving Teacher of men. With a heart that can feel for the woes and miseries of our fellow-creatures, and that can cherish kindness towards them, there is no conscious love to God, and no cheerful response to His claims. The mind may be acute, the disposition amiable, the character virtuous, and yet the soul be dead, alien from God, and blind to its own greatest needs. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The transition from death to life*:—The physical order is a descent from life to death; the spiritual order an ascent from death to life. I. THE NATURAL CONDITION OF HUMANITY IS ONE OF SPIRITUAL DEATH. Man is in a condition of—1. Spiritual insensibility. The dead know nothing, appreciate nothing; nor does the sinner of the things of God. 2. Moral corruption. "And the uncircumcision of your flesh." Death unbinds the forces that brace up the body in life, and leaves it a prey to the power of corruption. 3. Condemnation. (1) The Divine ordinances record an indictment against the transgressor. (a) Handwriting. The primary reference is to the Jews, who might be said to have signed the contract when they bound themselves, by a curse, to observe all the enactments of the law (*Deut. xxvii. 14-26*). (b) Ordinances, though referring primarily to the Mosaic ordinances, include all forms of positive decrees in which moral or social principles are embodied or religious duties defined. Man everywhere is under law, written or unwritten; and he is morally obligated to obey it. (2) The Divine ordinances are hostile towards the transgressor. "Which was contrary to us." We are often painfully reminded of our broken bond, as the debtor is often reminded of his undischarged obligation. II. THE BELIEVER IS RAISED INTO A CONDITION OF SPIRITUAL LIFE. 1. This life begins in the consciousness of liberty. "Having forgiven you all trespasses." 2. It implies a freedom from all condemnation. III. THE TRANSITION OF THE SOUL FROM DEATH TO LIFE IS A DIVINE WORK. 1. God only can raise the dead. 2. He does so by a blessed union with Christ. 3. Which issues in immortal life. (*G. Barlow.*) *Quickened.—Characteristics of the new life*:—I. SPONTANEITY. Life is neither mechanical nor forced, but proceeds from the principle of vitality within. When man by grace begins to live anew, what was formerly a burden, if it received any attention at all, becomes a pleasure. Commandments which were grievous are now joyous, and the newborn energy finds its spontaneous manifestation in loving loyalty to God's will. II. ASSIMILATION. Life is nourished by that which may seem foreign to its nature. The rose can draw beauty and fragrance from pestilent manure, juices of the soil, radiance of sunshine and showers from heaven. So the new life derives strength even from trial and the bread of sorrow. All things work together for its good, not excepting the entanglements of the flesh and the cares of the world. III. GROWTH. All life grows, and the Christian who does not has an unhealthy life. His privilege is to be like a tree (*Psa. i. 3*). IV. ASPIRATION. Life everywhere seeks to reach the perfection of its nature. Spiritual life comes from above and seeks to rise to the level of its source. It cannot rest satisfied with the world, but puts forth its tendrils

Godwards. **V. INDIVIDUALITY.** No two plants, blades of grass, animals, men, are exactly alike. God loves variety in grace as well as nature. So some Christians are intellectual, some emotional, some practical; yet all are one in Christ. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The great deliverance:*—I. **THE MISERABLE CONDITION OF OUR NATURE.** 1. All the children of Adam are reckoned as dead. (1) Because Divine grace, the soul, as it were, of the soul, being withdrawn, a polluting mass of deadly vices succeeded in their room. (2) Because they lie under the sentence of eternal death (Eph. ii. 3). 2. The causes of this death are—(1) Actual transgressions of the Divine law—"The wages of sin is death," "The soul that sinneth it shall die." (a) This is the death of grace inasmuch as sin by its impurity dissolves the gracious union of the soul to God in which our life consists (Isa. lix. 2). (b) The death of hell (Rom. ii. 9). (2) The uncircumcision of your flesh, *i.e.*, original sin, which is derived by carnal propagation and renders the very soul, as it were, carnal (Deut. x. 16; Jer. ix. 25). Every natural man is dead in this his native corruption. (a) The understanding, which is the eye of the soul, is darkened and blinded as to spiritual things (1 Cor. ii. 14), and rushes into errors and deceivings (Gal. v. 20). (b) The will is depraved, its good desires weak, its unlawful desires strong (Gen. vi. 5; Rom. iii.). (c) The inferior powers of the soul are disordered, so that they refuse to obey the law of the mind (Rom. vii. 23). Hence the affections control, and are not controlled by reason. 3. Lessons: (1) Since every man in a state of nature is dead, it is not in the power of free will, by its own strength, to prepare for conversion, even as a dead man cannot dispose himself for his resurrection (Lam. v. 21). (2) No man can dispose himself to any motion to quicken himself unless his mind be formed to the life of grace by God. For as every natural operation supposes a natural power, so every spiritual motion a spiritual power (Ezek. xi. 19). (3) Since the cause of death is sin, the madness of men is discovered who administer that deadly poison to the soul and are guilty of its murder. II. **THE DELIVERER; GOD IN CHRIST, BY CHRIST, AND WITH CHRIST.** God alone could impart animal life to this earth; He alone, therefore, can impart spiritual life to carnal men, which is a greater work than creation (Eph. ii. 10). Hence we may learn—1. The eternal love of God the Father. We shudder to touch the dead bodies of our friends; but God is not only ready to touch but to embrace and restore our dead souls. This should inflame us with love to Him. 2. The infinite guilt of sin which could not be acquitted, and we justified but by the death and resurrection of Christ. This should excite our hatred and avoidance of sin. III. **THE DELIVERANCE.** 1. The forgiveness of our trespasses. In this it is to be noticed that it is—(1) Gratuitous, *χαρισματινος*, being derived from grace itself. It is gratuitous on our part, for we are absolved without any price paid by ourselves; but on the part of Christ we are redeemed with the price of His precious blood (Rom. iii. 24), and indeed either a gratuitous remission or none at all must be admitted. As to ourselves, we are not able to pay, since the debt is infinite; nor can we blot out our sins by suffering, because no suffering of the guilty is deletive of sin. (2) Universal—"All trespasses." For it does not accord with Divine majesty and goodness to remit some of our debts and require the rest from us. Because—(a) The blood of Christ being received as a ransom, it would be unjust not to remit all, since that outweighs all. (b) To forgive is an act of paternal love and cannot dwell with enmity; but enmity remains with unremitted sin, and those who admit a partial remission make God at once reconciled and hostile. (c) Unless we reckon on full remission, remission is vain; for its end is life eternal, which a partial remission cannot yield the hope of, because death is the wages of even one sin (Jer. xxxiii. 8; Micah vii. 19; 1 John i. 9). 2. Hence we derive these corollaries—(1) To forgive sins is the property of God alone; for who can forgive another his debt while the will of the creditor is not yet understood (Isa. xliii. 25). (2) As universal remission is granted on God's part there ought to be a universal detestation of it on ours. (3) Troubled consciences may be sustained, for though sin be not destroyed upon faith it is forgiven. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *The Holy Spirit is the quickener.*—The same shower blesses various lands in different degrees, according to their respective susceptibilities. It makes the grass to spring up in the mead, the grain to vegetate in the field, the shrub to grow on the plain, and the flowers to blossom in the garden; and these are garnished with every hue of loveliness—the lily and the violet, the rose and the daisy: all these worketh the same Spirit that renews the face of the earth. The influences of the Holy Spirit, descending on the moral soil, produce "blessing in variety"—convictions in the guilty, illumination in the ignorant, holiness in the defiled, strength in the feeble, and comfort in the distressed.

As the Spirit of holiness, He imparts a pure taste; as the Spirit of glory, He throws a radiance over the character; as the Spirit of life, He revives religion; as the Spirit of truth, He gives transparency to the conduct; as the Spirit of prayer, He melts the soul into devotion; and, as the Spirit of grace, He imbues with benevolence, and covers the face of the earth with the works of faith and labours of love. (T. W. Jenkyn, D.D.)

Ver. 14. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances.—I. THE HANDWRITING. 1. It is often the practice of Scripture to liken a sin to a debt; whence remitting it is equivalent to pardoning it (Matt. vi. 12; cf. Luke xi. 4). Indeed the Chaldees and Syrians used the words sinner and debtor interchangeably. The reason is that there is a resemblance between the two. As the one obliges the debtor to payment, the other obliges the sinner to punishment. As a debt gives the creditor power over his debtor, so sin consigns the offender to God. 2. The word "handwriting" signifies an acknowledgement signed by us that we owe a certain sum and bind ourselves to pay. It is an authentic testimony of our debt, and makes our body and goods liable. The handwriting of the text is the instrument of our condemnation, and subjects us to the justice of God. 3. This handwriting was the old law, as the word "ordinances," the following context, and the purpose of the apostle to show that Judaism was not binding on the Colossians, prove. 4. This handwriting in itself is good and profitable, but it became "contrary" through sin. (1) It serves to convict us, as an obligation produced in judgment stops the mouth of an unfaithful debtor. (2) It is against our inclinations, which are lawless. (3) It threatens punishment, which we feel to be deserved and which we cannot evade. II. WHAT IS DONE WITH IT? It is made void by the Cross. 1. It is blotted out, as it is usual with men when a debt is paid to efface the name of the creditor and the amount he owed. So God has erased the handwriting of this debt which was written in His law for our consciences. 2. The means employed is some fluid, as ink, which is drawn over the page; so our obligation is made void by the effusion of Christ's blood. 3. Men who are exact not only efface their debtors' writings but tear them up, that no sign of the debt may remain. So God has so effaced the handwriting against us that not even the erasures appear; it is rent by the nails of the cross. Conclusion: 1. This furnishes us with a clear proof of Christ's satisfaction. If Christ's death is merely an example the law could sustain no injury, and if these words can be applied to Him they can be applied to other martyrs; but who would dare to do that? 2. This shows us the error of the doctrine of human merit: for God can exact nothing now that Christ has paid all. 3. The enjoyment of this privilege wrought on the cross is conditional upon faith. (J. Daillé.) *The handwriting blotted out*.—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY HANDWRITING? 1. Opinions are various; yet all agree in this that something is intended which by force of testimony may prove us guilty before God. Some assert it to be—(1) The covenant of God with Adam (Gen. ii. 17), for this being violated, Adam and his posterity were held guilty of death as by a bond. (2) The stipulation of the Jews (Exod. xix. 7, 8), by which they bound themselves to perfect obedience, by the non-performance of which they might be justly condemned by their own hand. (3) The remembrance of our sins in the Divine mind and in our own conscience (Isa. xliii. 25), by which we are convicted, as by a bond. The Divine law says, "Thou shalt love the Lord," &c. Conscience suggests, "I have not done so, and am, therefore, cursed." (4) Ceremonial rites which testified to guilt, circumcision to depravity, purifications to the filthiness of sin, sacrifices to the heinousness of guilt. 2. I explain it to mean the moral law binding to perfect obedience and condemning defect, laden with rites as appendages. II. HOW IS IT AGAINST US? 1. As to the moral law, it is holy, just, and good; nevertheless it has become deadly to us through sin (Rom. vii. 12, 13), because—(1) It propounds decrees contrary to human nature (Rom. vii. 12, 13). (2) It arraigns, convicts, and brings us in guilty of sin (Rom. iii. 20). (3) It denounces against us the sentence of condemnation (Gal. iii. 10). 2. As to ordinances, they were contrary, because—(1) They were almost infinite as to number, and most burdensome as to observance. Hence the appeal, Gal. v. 1. (2) By their signification and testimony. For although they seemed to promise the destruction of sin, yet there entered into them a confession rather than expiation thereof. III. HOW IT IS MADE VOID. 1. Universally and sufficiently as it respects God; because by the blood of Christ such satisfaction is made to God that according to His own justice He is engaged to acquit those debtors who flee by faith to the Deliverer. 2. Particularly and efficaciously when it is blotted out from the conscience of those who lay hold of God by faith (Rom. v.

1). There is no peace to a man who sees himself overwhelmed in debt and entangled by a bond; but when Christ's deliverance is accepted the soul enters into peace. 3. Notice the beautiful gradation. Not content with telling us we are forgiven, Paul subjoins that the handwriting is blotted out; but lest any should think that it is not so, but that a new charge may be raised, he adds it is "taken out of the way"; and lest it should be thought to be preserved somewhere, and may yet be preferred, he says it is nailed to the Cross, rent in pieces. Conclusion: We learn—1. From the handwriting. (1) Since every man through it is guilty of death, how dreadful is the condition of those who trample on the blood by which alone the handwriting can be blotted out. God will require from them the uttermost farthing. (2) We see the insane pride of those who think they can satisfy God, yea, pay Him more than is due by works of supererogation. But what need then of blotting out the handwriting by the Cross? 2. From its contrariety. (1) The depravity and corruption of our nature; for at its institution it was friendly and wholesome. (2) The error of those who would restore ceremonies and rob us of our liberty in Christ. 3. From the abolition. (1) Since it is deprived of its condemning force we infer that it still retains its directing force, and so we have not a licence to sin but a motive to obey (Luke i. 74, 75). (2) Since the comfort of a troubled conscience consists in its being blotted out, we must labour to maintain by faith not only that Christ has procured that but that it is blotted out as respects ourselves. A debtor does not consider himself safe until he has seen with his own eyes that his bond is cancelled. (*Bp. Davenant.*) *Our indictment cancelled by the Cross*:—Liberty is the way to true life for man. A slave has nothing to live for: but proclaim his freedom, and he becomes another being. So with the man whom God sets free. Quickening from God comes in forgiveness of sins. I. THE INDICTMENT AGAINST US—the law of God as expressed in the ten commandments and written in the heart (Rom. ii. 14). 1. Here we have man's moral obligation, of which men everywhere have been more or less conscious. Moral sense of the two great duties of love to God and our neighbour is everywhere diffused. The handwriting is so on every man's soul that he knows and feels that some things ought to be done while others are forbidden as wrong. Many attempt to efface the handwriting, as well as to defy it, but that only confirms the fact that it exists in all the fulness of its claim. 2. This handwriting is "against us" because we have broken it. The law is for the lawless, and its verdict is only against the sinful. It commands our supreme love to God, and we have not loved Him. This is the debt we owe to God as our Creator and Father; we have not paid it and now cannot. 3. It is also "contrary to us." The terms are not exactly equivalent. The one expresses silent condemnation, the other a positive hostility. A man may owe a debt he cannot pay, and this fact is an obligation against him, even though there be no positive demand for payment. But if by the process of "dunning" the debt is often brought before him, and he is unpleasantly reminded of it, then the obligation is not only against him, it is contrary to him: it disturbs his peace and fills him with dread. So the Divine law acting on the law of our mind is constantly reminding us of our obligation, and is hostile to our peace. Its spirituality is against us, for we are carnal; its purity, for we are unholy; its justice, for we have kept back God's due. Such is the indictment, "that every mouth may be stopped" (Rom. iii. 19). II. THE INDICTMENT CANCELLED. The verdict against sinful men is erased or wiped out. This idea often recurs in Scripture in reference to sin—"blot out all my iniquities." 2. It is taken out of the way; not that the law and moral obligation are abolished, but the verdict is removed so that it cannot be adduced for our condemnation. Literally it is "taken out of the midst," as if the handwriting had lain between God and His people—a barrier to their approach to Him, and to their peace with Him. 3. The means. Nailing to the cross and so destruction. Its condemning force was exhausted on Christ, so that it is powerless against all who are in Him. This is our discharge: the law has been fulfilled, and its finding against us for ever taken away. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The Cross the death of law*:—I. THE HANDWRITING OR BOND. 1. "Law" means primarily the ceremonial law which was being pressed on the Colossians. The early controversies on this matter are difficult for us to understand. It is harder to change customs than creeds, and religious observances live on, as every Maypole on a village green tells us, long after the beliefs which animated them are forgotten. So there was a party who refused the admittance of Gentile converts to the Church except through the old doorway of circumcision. This was the point at issue between Paul and these teachers. 2. But the modern distinction between moral and ceremonial had no existence in Paul's mind, nor in

the Old Testament, where we find the highest morality and the merest ritual interstratified. The law was a homogeneous whole. 3. And the principles laid down are true about all law. Law, as such, is dealt with by Christianity in the same way as the God-given code. 4. Law, Paul tells us, is antagonistic. It stands opposite, frowning at us and barring our road. (1) Is it then become our enemy because it tells us the truth? This conception is a strange contrast to the rapturous delight of Psalmists in it. Surely God's greatest gift to man is the knowledge of His will, and law is beneficent, a light, and a guide, and even its strokes are merciful. (2) Nevertheless the antagonism is very real. As with God, so with law—if we be against Him, He cannot but be against us. We make Him our dearest friend or our foe. The revelation of duty to which we are not inclined is ever unwelcome. Law is against us because—(a) It comes like a taskmaster bidding us do, but neither putting the inclination into our hearts nor the power into our hands. (b) The revelation of unfulfilled duty is the accusation of the defaulter. (c) It comes with threatenings and foretastes of penalty. Thus, as standard, accuser, and avenger, it is against us. (3) We all know this. Each of us has seen that apparition like the sword-bearing angel that Balaam saw, blocking our path when we wanted to "go frowardly in the way of our heart." The law of the Lord should be "sweeter than honey," &c., but the corruption of the best is the worst, and we can make it poison. Obeyed, it is as the chariot of fire to bear us heavenward; disobeyed, it is an iron car crushing all who set themselves against it. II. ITS DESTRUCTION IN THE CROSS. 1. The Cross ends the law's power of punishment. Paul believed that the burden and penalty of sin had been laid on Christ, and trusting ourselves to the power of that great sacrifice, the dread of punishment will fade from our hearts, and the law will have to draw the bolts of the prison and let the captive go free. 2. The Cross is the end of the law as ceremonial. The Jewish ritual had the prediction of the Great Sacrifice for its highest purpose. When the fruit has set there is no more need for petals. We have the reality and do not need the shadow. 3. The Cross is the end of the law as moral rule. Of course it is not meant that Christian men are freed from the obligations of morality, but that we are not bound to do "the things contained in the law" because they are there. Duty is duty now because we see the pattern of conduct and character in Christ. The weakness of law is that it has no power to get its commandments obeyed; but Christ puts His love in our hearts, and so we pass from the dominion of an external commandment into the liberty of an inward spirit. The long schism between duty and inclination is at an end. So a higher morality ought to characterize the partakers of the life of Christ. Law died with Christ on the cross that it might rise and reign in our inmost hearts. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Cancelled and nailed up*:—There is a beautiful oriental custom which illustrates the Atonement. When a debt had to be settled either by payment or forgiveness, the creditor took the cancelled bond and nailed it over the door of him who had owed it, that all passers by might see that it was paid. So there is the Cross, the door of grace, behind which a bankrupt world lies in hopeless debt to the law. See Jesus our bondman and brother, coming forth with a long list of our indebtedness in His hand. He lifts it up where God and angels and men may see it, and there as the nail goes through His hand it goes through the bond of our transgressions to cancel it for ever. Come to that Cross! Not in order that you may wash away your sins by your tears or atone for them by your good works, or efface them by your sophistries and self-deceptions. But come rather that you may read the long black list that is against you, and be pierced to your heart by sorrow that you have offended such a Being; and then that lifting up your eyes you may see God turning His eyes at that same cross at which you are looking, and saying, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions," &c. (*New Testament Anecdotes.*) *The law is against sinners*:—There are stronger things in the world than force. There are powers more difficult to overcome than strong or brazen gates. Suppose we found a prisoner condemned to die, and locked up in his cell, and we were to ask ourselves how he could be saved from execution. There would appear great difficulty in getting him out of prison. That iron door, with its great bolt; that high window, with its guard of strong bars; those thick, strong walls; those heavy gates outside; that watchful jailer,—how impossible it seems to overcome them all! Yet these are not the only difficulties, nor the greatest. There is another thing, stronger than all these, holding the poor prisoner to death: there is the sentence of the law. For, unless he would himself become a criminal, no man dares to help the condemned one out. Get the sentence repealed, and the other difficulties are removed. (*J. Edmond, D.D.*)

Ver. 15. Having spoiled principalities and powers, or, having stripped off and put away the powers of evil. Christ took upon Himself our human nature with all its temptations (Heb. iv. 15). The powers of evil gathered about Him. Again and again they assailed Him, but each fresh assault ended in a new defeat. In the wilderness He was tempted by Satan; but Satan retired for a time baffled and defeated (Luke iv. 13). Through the voice of His chief disciple the temptation was renewed, and He was entreated to decline His appointed sufferings and death. Satan was again driven off (Matt. xvi. 23; comp. viii. 31). Then the last hour came. This was the great crisis of all, when the power of darkness made itself felt (Luke xxii. 53), when the prince of this world asserted his tyranny (John xii. 81). The final act in the conflict began with the agony in Gethsemane, and ended with the cross of Calvary. The victory was complete. The enemy of man was defeated. The powers of evil, which had clung like a Nessus robe about His humanity, were torn off and cast aside for ever. And the victory of man is involved in the victory of Christ. In His death we too are divested of the poisonous clinging garments of temptation, and sin, and death. For this image of the garments see Isa. lxiv. 6, but especially Zechariah iii. In this prophetic passage the image is used of His type and namesake, the Jesus of the Restoration, not in His own person, but as the High Priest and representative of a guilty, but cleansed and forgiven people, with whom He is identified. The "powers" specially meant are those of Eph. vi. 12. "Displayed" as a victor displays his captives or trophies in a triumphal procession. Nowhere does the word convey the idea of making an example, but signifies to display, publish, proclaim. "Boldly," not publicly, although the latter idea may be sometimes connected with the word as a secondary notion (John vii. 4). "Leading them in triumph," the same metaphor as in 2 Cor. ii. 14. Here, however, it is the defeated powers of evil; there the subjugated persons of men who are led in public, chained to the triumphal car of Christ. "In the Cross." The violence of the metaphor is its justification. The paradox of the crucifixion is thus placed in its strongest light—triumph in helplessness, glory in shame. The convict's gibbet is the victor's car. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) *Christ triumphant*:—To the eye of reason the Cross is the centre of sorrow, the lowest depth of shame; to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness. How different, however, to the eye of faith—a token of glory, a field of triumph, the chariot in which Christ rode when He led captivity captive. I. CHRIST MAKING A SPOIL OF PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS. 1. The contest. Satan, leagued with sin and death, had made this world the home of woe. He found our first parents in Eden; they became his slaves. Yet the voice of mercy was heard even while the fetters were being rivetted—"Ye shall be free." The earth groaned and travailed in its bondage. In the fulness of time, the Deliverer came forth born of a woman. Then came the Temptation; eventually the Passion; at last the Cross. Hark how the Conqueror cries, "It is finished." Where are now His enemies? All defeated. 2. The division of the spoil. (1) He disarmed His enemies. Satan had in his hand a sharp sword called the Law. This was wrested from his hand. Death was deprived of his darts, which were broken in two, and the feather end returned that he might never destroy the ransomed. Sin, Satan's armour bearer, was despoiled of his shield. (2) Victors carry away all the treasures belonging to the vanquished. Satan had taken away all our possessions—Paradise with all its joy and peace—not that he could enjoy them—but Christ has gotten them all back. (3) Victors take away all the ornaments from the enemy, the crown and jewels. Satan's crown is taken away, his sovereignty is gone. He may tempt, but he cannot compel, threaten but not subdue. 3. What says this to us? If Christ has spoiled Satan, let us not be afraid to encounter him. (1) If he accuse you, reply, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (2) If he condemn you, ask, "Who is he that condemneth?" (3) If he threaten to divide you, shout, "I am persuaded," &c. (4) If he let loose your sins upon you, dash the hell dogs aside with this, "If any man sin," &c. (5) If death should threaten you, exclaim, "Oh death, where is thy sting?" &c. Your battles shall turn to your advantage. The more numerous they are the greater the spoil. Your tribulation shall work patience, &c. II. THE TRIUMPH. 1. Most of the old commentators refer this to the resurrection and the ascension; Paul refers it to the Cross, but the Cross as the ground of the ultimate triumph when Christ shall enter on His reign over an undisputed universe. 2. Picture this triumph. The pearly gates open, angels crowd on the battlements. (1) The vanguard of the redeemed approach the city. Abel comes in alone, and then follow the patriarchs, prophets,

heroes, of four thousand years. (2) The Prince of the House of David, with Satan, sin, and death in eternal captivity. (3) Then the great mass of His people—fathers, reformers, &c. (4) I might describe the mighty pictures at the end of the procession, for in the old Roman triumphs the deeds of the conqueror were depicted in paintings, the towns he had taken, the battles he had fought. I might present hell destroyed; heaven's gates opened by the golden lever of Christ's atonement; the grave despoiled. Conclusion: Where will you be? Among the captives or in the Conqueror's train? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The triumph of the Cross*:—I. WAS OVER THE POWERS OF EVIL. 1. The existence of evil is a painful fact, we meet with it everywhere. 2. Evil is embodied in invisible and potent personalities, called—(1) Principalities, because of their excellency, knowledge, and station. (2) Powers, because of the mighty influence they wield and the terrible havoc they work. They exist in vast numbers (2 Pet. iv. 2; Jude 6), and are the bitter foes of man (Eph. vi. 12). II. WAS ACHIEVED AFTER SEVERE CONFLICT. The conflict was—1. Continuous from the Fall to the Cross. 2. Piercing. 3. Deadly (Luke xxii. 53; John xii. 30). III. WAS SIGNAL AND COMPLETE. LESSONS: 1. Christ has conquered the powers of evil. 2. To the believer ultimate victory is certain. 3. Keep up a brave heart in the fiercest conflict. (*G. Barlow.*) *Christ's victory*:—The shock that buried Lisbon in 1755 never ceased to vibrate till it reached the wilds of Scotland and the vineyards of Madeira. It was felt among the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, and it changed the level of the solitary lakes that sleep beneath the shadows of the North Alps. Even so the shock that Satan's kingdom sustained when Christianity was established will not cease to vibrate till it move the whole world. (*Christ and other Masters.*) *Believers share the triumph of Christ*:—"I belong to death's Master," was the expression of a Christian woman lately, who at length died of internal cancer. She was attended by a Roman Catholic nurse, who was very much astonished at the calm patience and peace of the poor sufferer. A lady called to see her one day. The door was opened by the nurse. "How is Mrs. Bristow to-day?" inquired the visitor. "She is very ill, sir," was the reply. The nurse then gave the following details:—"Last night she was seized with violent pain, and I thought she was dying. I said to her, 'You are dying; shall I send for a clergyman to prepare you for death?' 'Oh, no,' she said, 'I want no minister, for I am ready to die at any moment.' 'But,' I said, 'are you not afraid to die?' 'No, indeed, not a bit,' she replied. 'Tell me why you are not afraid to die, when you have not been prepared by your clergyman, nor received the rites of your Church?' I said, 'Because,' she replied, joyously, 'I belong to death's Master. I am a poor sinner saved by grace, and His blood has washed away my sin, and secured me a title to glory.'" *The triumph of Christ*:—"I do not admire Napoleon, except in the matter of his cool courage, but for that he was noteworthy. They always represent him in the midst of the battle with folded arms. His eagle eye is on the conflict, but he is motionless as a statue. Every soldier in the imperial army felt that victory was sure, for the captain was so self-possessed. If he had been hurrying too and fro, rushing here, there, and everywhere, and making a great fuss about everything, they would have inferred that defeat was impending. But see him yonder! All is well. He knows what he is at. It is all right, for he does not strive, nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard; he is calm, for he can see that all is well. There stands the Crucified this day, upon the vantage ground, at the right hand of God, and He surveys the battle-field in calm expectancy until His enemies are made His footstool. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 16-17. Let no man therefore judge you.—*Christian liberty*:—I. THE POINTS IN WHICH THAT LIBERTY IS TO BE EXERCISED. 1. Those which, in addition to circumcision, were principally in question were—(1) Meat and drink, which refers to unclean things, things offered to idols, and perhaps the Nazarite vow. As there were few Jewish regulations as to drink, probably other ascetic practices were in question. (2) Sacred seasons—annual festivals, the monthly feast of the new moon, and the weekly Sabbath. 2. The relation of the Gentile converts to these was really the question whether Christianity was to be more than a Jewish sect, and the main force which, under God, settled the contest was the vehemence and logic of Paul. 3. He lays down the ground on which the whole matter was to be settled. They are a "shadow," &c. "Coming events cast their shadows before." The great work of Christ whose "goings forth have been from everlasting," may be thought of as having set out from the Throne as soon as time

was, like the beams of some far-off star that have not yet reached a dark world. The light from the Throne is behind Him as He advances across the centuries, and the shadow is thrown far in front. II. This involves THE PURELY PROPHETIC AND SYMBOLIC CHARACTER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ORDER. 1. Sacrifice, altar, priest, temple, spoke of Christ. (1) The distinctions of meats were meant to familiarize men with the conceptions of purity and impurity, and so, by stimulating conscience to work the need of a Purifier. (2) The yearly feasts set forth various aspects of Christ's work, and the Sabbath showed in outward form the rest into which He leads His people who cease from their own works and wear His yoke. And all are like outriders who precede a prince on his progress, and as they gallop through sleeping villages rouse them with the cry, "the king is coming." 2. And when the king has come where are the heralds? When the reality, who wants the shadows? And if that which threw the shadow forward has arrived, how shall the shadow be visible too? III. Therefore THE CESSATION OF ALL THESE OBSERVANCES IS INVOLVED IN THEIR PROPHETIC CHARACTER. 1. The practical conclusion is not, "let no man observe these any more," but "let no man judge you" about them. He does not quarrel with the rites, but with men insisting on them. 2. His own practice is the best commentary on his meaning. When they said to him, "You must circumcise Titus," he said, "Then I will not." When nobody tried to compel him he circumcised Timothy to avoid scandals. 3. In times of transition, wise supporters of the new will not be in a hurry to break with the old. The brown sheaths remain on the twigs after the tender green leaf has burst from within them, but there is no need to pull them off, for they will drop presently. 4. The bearing of Paul's principles on the religious observance of Sunday. (1) The obligation of the Jewish Sabbath has passed away, but the institution of a weekly day of rest is put in Scripture independently and prior to the Mosaic institution. That is the natural conclusion from the narrative in Genesis, the fact that Sabbath was made for man, *i.e.*, for the race, and the traces of a pre-Mosaic Sabbath, *e.g.*, in Assyria. It is a physical and moral necessity, and that is a mistaken benevolence which on the plea of culture or amusement for the many, compels the labour of the few. (2) The gradual growing up of the practice of observing "the Lord's day" is in accordance with the whole spirit of the New Covenant, which has next to nothing to say about externals, but leaves the new life to shape itself. The necessity of a day of rest is not less now than at the first. I distrust the spirituality which professes that all life is a Sabbath, and therefore holds itself absolved from special seasons of worship; but it is better to think of the day as a great gift for the highest purposes, than to keep it as a mere commandment. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The ceremonial and the real in religion*.—Ceremonial in religion—I. CAN FORM NO JUST BASIS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONDEMNATION. "Let no man judge you." The essence of religion does not consist in the outward form, but the inward spirit. II. IS TYPICAL OF THE REAL. Rites have their place in the culture of the race, and in their proper sphere are important. They sketch the outlines of truths, and are valuable only as they conduct to the realities they predict and typify. III. IS ABOLISHED AND RENDERED NUGATORY BY THE REAL. It is a dangerous infatuation to snatch at the shadow when we may embrace the substance. Lessons: 1. Learn to exercise forbearance in externals. 2. Christ alone can satisfy the deepest craving of the soul. (*G. Barlow.*) *The shadow and the substance*.—"Therefore" marks the connection. The handwriting is destroyed, Christians are free; why then go back to the elements of bondage. I. THE ADMONITION. 1. Eating and drinking have reference to the dietetic injunctions of Mosaism. These had a strong hold of the Jewish mind (Acts x. 9-16). The distinctions of days point collectively to the periodical feasts and sacred seasons. And the idea was that all this was essential to salvation, and so obligatory on Gentile Christians. 2. Against this notion Paul asserts the great principle of Christian liberty. Such things ought never to be a criterion of piety. Yet how strong is the tendency to-day to forbid certain kinds of food at certain seasons, and to insist on saints' days. The doctrine here is that one kind of food is as lawful, and one day as sacred, as another. All these distinctions have passed away, and are no longer binding. That we are at liberty to observe certain days, such as those on which we commemorate the great redemptive facts, *e.g.*, Christmas, Easter, &c., there can be no doubt, but they are not obligatory (Rom. xiv. 6). 3. The great practical question is that which relates to the Sabbath. The seventh day was long kept along with the first; but this was condemned as Judaizing by the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364). The apostle declares that a Christian's true piety is not to be judged by his regard of the

Jewish Sabbath any more than to the other festivals. That was a shadow of the Lord's day. That a seventh portion of our time should be specially given to God is based on considerations as old as creation; but the foundation and character of the Lord's day are altogether changed from those of the Jewish Sabbath. Its true principle is allegiance to a living Saviour whose resurrection on that day it commemorates, as laying the foundation of a new spiritual creation. The Saviour's appearances on that day subsequent to His resurrection, and the usage of the apostles, hallow the first day of the week, and make it with a Divine fitness and beauty the Christian's day of rest. II. THE ARGUMENT. The coming Saviour as the Sun of Righteousness, in the establishment of the Jewish economy, flung a shadow of His approaching advent and dispensation down on the descendants of Abraham, that they might walk in it, and conserve the worship and truth of God. As a shadow it was—1. Predicted and foretold that something grander was coming. 2. It was prefigurative. A shadow is a likeness, however faint, and the truths embodied in Christ were dimly typified in Judaism. 3. But as a shadow is evanescent, it was made to vanish away when that which was perfect had come. Then it answered its purpose and disappeared. The reality was reached in the Son of God. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Religion, freedom, and joy*:—Religion is not like the prophet's roll, sweet as honey when it was in his mouth, but as bitter as gall in his belly. Religion is no sullen stoicism, no sour Pharisaism: it does not consist in a few melancholy passions, in some dejected looks or depressions of mind; but it consists in freedom, love, peace, life, and power; the more it comes to be digested into our lives, the more sweet and lovely we shall find it to be. Those spots and wrinkles which corrupt minds think they see in the face of religion are, indeed, nowhere else but in their own deformed and misshapen apprehensions. It is no wonder, when a defiled fancy comes to be the glass, if you have an unlovely reflection. (*John Smith.*)

Vers. 18-19. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility.—It is evident that "humility" here is degraded and discoloured by the tinge which is given it by its close connection with the words "in a voluntary." This is a rendering in the LXX. of a Hebrew word signifying "taking a delight in, having one's own inclination gratified in." $\theta\epsilon\lambda\omega$ is used of that which a man does of his own notion, and passes over into the notion of sheer self-will and arbitrariness. Thus we learn the important lesson that virtues and graces are too delicate for the rough admeasurement of mere hard and fast moral lines. Their beauty and acceptability depart, and may even turn into their opposites. Wilful self-complacency in humility is censured by St. Paul as inconsistent with the sweet unconsciousness of true humility. It becomes the worst pride, or the most abject meanness—the pride or the meanness which apes humility. The word "will worship" in ver. 23 shows that a strong sense of $\theta\epsilon\lambda\omega$, as intense self-will, was present to St. Paul's mind. There as here, self-will imparts a contamination to the virtue with which it is associated. Humility and worship themselves become pride and superstition. Hence in Luke i. 48 the word should be rendered "low estate," not humility. One who says, "I am humble," is not humble. Mary does not profess humility, she practices it. (*Bp. Alexander.*) *Speculative and practical error*:—I. THE SPECULATIVE SIDE OF THE COLOSSIAN HERESY. In the Authorized Version the apostle is made to bring a charge of presumption against the false teachers "intruding into the things which he hath not seen." But this is a strange argument for one whose whole walk was by faith and not by sight, and who would hardly count it an answer to a professed revelation to say "you are intruding into that which you have not seen, and therefore you cannot know" with modern materialists. But this difficulty is removed in the Revised Version, which, on high authority, omits the "not," and inverts the argument. Again, the Greek word "intruding into" means "dwelling in" or "taking his stand upon," and the charge now becomes that of self-complacent self-conceit. 1. This man has "seen things," the exact equivalent of our "a man has views," a phrase of which obscure thinkers are very fond. The Colossian speculator may have professed to see visions and revelations of the Lord, and to have come back from the third heaven to reveal them; or, if not this, to have seen things in the tone of an arrogant thinker, who gives his notions the style of certainties, verified with the eye of the mind, "dwelling in" them with complacent satisfaction as the whole of truth. 2. Or we may take the marginal reading, "taking his stand upon" his views; regarding them as land which he has won with his intellectual bow and

spear, and from which he can go on to move or conquer the universe. 3. These new thinkers spoke much of the mind, made knowledge the bait of their enticements, endeavoured to establish an aristocracy of intellect within that Christian society which was free to all comers, and in which the wise and prudent are set side by side with babes. How striking is St. Paul's language, "idly inflated with the mind of his flesh." So far from being edified into the spiritual realm it was merely puffed up, and had its moving power in the repudiated sphere of matter. That Paul would so describe all so-called modern thought which sets aside Christ is certain. II. We pass on to verse 23 to THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF THE NEW HERESY. 1. Here we have its treatment of matter, how its teachers sought by ceremonial prohibitions (ver. 21) to counteract the deadly influence of sense in spirit, and to mortify the body as an enemy of the spiritual life. It was a plausible, and perhaps, in its origin, a well-intentioned effort. It was nobler than that which treats matter as of no moment. But the two perversions have one root. Asceticism and licence both rob the body of its dignity as the servant of the spirit. 2. St. Paul admits that the ascetic rules have a show of wisdom; they speak plausibly, and promise largely by their will worship, *i.e.*, their religion of self-imposed observances; by their humility, *i.e.*, their obsequiousness; and by their severity to the body, *i.e.*, their mortifying restrictions. 3. Thus far both versions agree. But now the Authorized Version says, "not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." This leaves out a particle which demands a contrast. But without this it is in accordance with St. Paul's teaching to blame a system for not satisfying the flesh? Indeed, the Greek word is "indulgence." But the Revised Version has inserted the particle of antithesis, and reads, "but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." The language is borrowed from the medical profession. What is good for it? What is a valuable remedy for such and such a disease? Indulgence of the flesh is the disease; can asceticism cure it? St. Paul says no! It sounds well, professes loudly, but has no real value. 4. Rules of abstinence, regulations as to food or drink—lawful, indeed, but from which it is an act of religion to abstain—have a show of wisdom; they point to a terrible evil and profess to cure it; they are well sounding words, "temperance" and the like; they talk of the value of humility in bending the neck to discipline. St. Paul does not deny that the conquest of the body is good, and that the means have something to say for themselves; but he declares as a man of large experience who has tried all means, and who is taught of God that all such regulations will fail. III. THE TRUE PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN THINKING AND LIVING. 1. In Christ Jesus are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. They who do not hold fast the Head therefore, whatever they may think or see or dream, cannot but be puffed up and not edified. 2. In Christ with whom our life is hid in God (chap. iii. 1) can alone be found the secret of the victory over the flesh which is the professed object of every system of ethics. If ye are dead what need of "touch not," &c.? If ye are risen the chains of flesh shall fall off by the influence of the spiritual life. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The angels and the Head:—I. THE WARNING.* 1. "Let no man rob you of your prize." The metaphor is that of the race or wrestling ground; the judge is Christ, the reward is the crown, not of fading bay leaves, but of sprays from the "tree of life" which dower with blessedness the brows round which they are wreathed. The tendency of the heresy is to rob them of this. No names were mentioned, but the portrait of the robber is drawn with four rapid but accurate strokes of the pencil. (1) "Delighting in humility and the worshipping of angels"—(a) The humility has not a genuine ring about it. Self-conscious humility in which a man takes delight is not the real thing. A man who knows that he is hurable and is self-complacent about it, glancing out of the corners of his downcast eyes at any mirror where he can see himself, is not humble at all. "The devil's darling vice is the pride that apes humility." (b) So very humble were these people that they would not venture to pray to God. The utmost they could do was to lay hold of the lowest link of a long chain of angel mediators in hope that the vibration might run upwards through all the links, and perhaps reach the throne at last. Such fantastic abasement which would not take God at His word, nor draw near to Him through Christ, was the very height of pride. (2) "Dwelling in the things he hath seen," *i.e.*, by visions, &c. The charge against the false teachers was of "walking in a vain show" of unreal imaginations. (3) "Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." The self-conscious humility was only skin deep, and covered the utmost intellectual arrogance. The false teacher was like a blown bladder, dropsical from conceit of "intellectual ability" which was after all only the instrument of the flesh, the

sinful self. Of course, such could have no grip of Christ, from whom such tempers were sure to detach. (4) Therefore, the damning indictment closes with "not holding the head." 2. The special forms of these errors are gone; but the tendencies which underlay them are as rampant as ever. (1) The worship of angels is dead, but we are often tempted to think that we are too sinful to claim our portion of the promises. The spurious humility is by no means out of date, which knows better than God whether He can forgive, and grasps at others as well as Christ, the one Mediator. (2) We do not see visions and dream dreams, except that here and there some one is led astray by "spiritualism," but plenty of us attach more importance to our speculations than to the clear revelation of God in Christ. The "unseen world" has for many an unwholesome attraction. The Gnostic spirit is still among us which despises the foundation truths of the gospel as milk for babes, and values its baseless artificial speculations about subordinate matters which are unrevealed because they are subordinate, and fascinating to some minds because unrevealed, far above the truths which are clear because they are vital, and inspired because clear. (3) And a swollen self-conceit is, of all things, the most certain to keep a man away from Christ. We must feel our utter helplessness and need before we shall lay hold of Him; and whatever slackens our hold of Christ tends to deprive us of the final prize. "Hold fast that thou hast; let no man take thy crown." II. THE SOURCE AND MANNER OF ALL TRUE GROWTH is set forth in order to enforce the warning and to emphasize the need of holding the head. 1. Christ is not merely represented as supreme and sovereign, but as the source of spiritual life. 2. That life which flows through the head is diffused through the whole body by the various and harmonious action of all the parts. The body is "supplied and knit together," i.e., the functions of nutrition and compaction into a whole are performed by the "joints and bands," in which last word are included muscles, nerves, tendons. Their action is the condition of growth, but the Head is the source of all. Churches have been bound together by other bonds, such as creeds, polity, nationality; but an external bond is only like a rope round a bundle of faggots. 3. The blessed results of supply and unity are effected through the action of the various parts. If each organ is in healthy action the body grows. There is diversity in offices; the same life is light in the eyes, beauty in the cheek, strength in the hand, thought in the brain. The effect of Christianity is to heighten individuality, and to give to each man his own proper "gift from God." The perfect light is the blending of all colours. 4. A community where each member thus holds firmly by the Head will increase with the increase of God. There is an increase not of God. These heretical teachers were swollen with dropsical self-conceit. The individual may increase in apparent knowledge, in volubility, in visions and speculations, in so-called Christian work; the Church may increase in members, wealth, influence, &c., and it may not be sound growth, but proud flesh that needs the knife. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The seductive peril of a false philosophy*:—A false philosophy—I. THREATENS TO ROB THE BELIEVER OF HIS REWARD. Many erroneous opinions may be held without invalidating salvation; but any error that depreciates our estimate of Christ, and interrupts the advance of our Christian life, is a robbery. II. ADVOCATES THE MOST PRESUMPTUOUS AND PERILOUS SPECULATIONS. 1. It affects a spurious humility. God is unknowable to the limited powers of man, so it reasons. But this humility was voluntary, self-induced, and was in reality another form of spiritual pride. 2. It invents a dangerous system of angelolatry. 3. It pretends to a knowledge of the mysterious. Locke says a work in the drawer of a cabinet might as well pretend to guess at the construction of the universe, as man venture to speculate about the unseen world. III. IGNORES THE DIVINE SOURCE OF ALL SPIRITUAL INCREASE. 1. Christ is the great Head of the Church—the centre of its unity, the source of its life, authority, and influence. 2. The Church is vitally and essentially united to Christ. 3. The vital union of the Church with Christ is the condition of spiritual increase. Lessons: A false philosophy—1. Distorts the grandest truths. 2. Substitutes for truth the most perilous speculations. 3. Against its teachings be ever on your guard. (*G. Barlow.*) *Angel worship*:—I. THE APOSTLE BRANDS THE SEDUCERS AND CONCLUDES THAT NO REGARD IS TO BE PAID TO THEM. 1. Because in sacred things they arrogated to themselves, by no right whatever, a power of determining as the judges were accustomed in contests. These voluntary umpires decreed the reward of eternal life to none who were unwilling to subscribe to their doctrines. Therefore, as St. Paul struck at this usurpation, we must understand that no such power is granted to man that he should determine anything in religion of his own

will; but is bound to judge according to Scripture (Isa. viii. 20). Hence estimate Romish tyranny which claims this very power. 2. They abused their power to deceive Christians. A director of the games, if he should order any one to run outside the course, would deprive him of his prize; because he would never that way arrive at the goal. So they who direct Christians to seek salvation apart from Christ, endeavour to beguile them of their reward (Heb. iii. 14). This condemnation rests on all who would lead us from the simplicity of Christ. II. He shows in what instance they abused their usurped authority. The foolish lowliness of mind which would seek the mediation of angels rather than that of Christ, is rebuked because Christ is more united to us than the angels (Rom. v. 2; Heb. iv. 16; Eph. iii. 12). 1. Because from this and similar places there arises between us and the Papists a great controversy about the worship of angels and deceased saints who are equal to the angels (Luke xx. 36); let us see with whom the truth lies. (1) Religious worship, whether it be called *latría* or *dulia*, is given to God alone, and not to angels or saints. "Religion," says Cicero, "is that which is comprised in the pious worship of the gods," and Hilary says that "religion paid to the creature is accursed." With this Scripture agrees (Deut. vi. 13; Gal. iv. 8; Rev. xix. 10). The foundation of religious worship is infinite excellence apprehended under the consideration of our first cause and chief good; it is not a sufficient reason therefore, for offering to them, that angels and saints are endowed with supernatural gifts, or procure for us many good things, unless they are the first and chief cause to us of our chief good. (2) The Papists ascribe to angels and even to saints supreme religious worship no less than these seducers here censured. (a) Prayer is an act of *latría* or highest worship; for where we pray we acknowledge that its object can hear, deliver, and answer (Psa. l. 15). But this is offered to saints. (b) To make a vow to another is an act of *latría*, due to God alone (Isa. xix. 21; Psa. l. 14). But vows are made to angels and saints. (c) To erect a house of prayer, to raise altars and offer incense upon them to any one is to pay Divine honour to him (Exod. xxx. 37; Matt. xxi. 13). But this is done wholesale by Rome to the angels and saints. 2. Paul rejects this doctrine, because (1) it proceeded from those who are accustomed rashly to invent and speak about matters unknown to them (1 Tim. i. 7). For they cannot trace angel or saint worship to the Word of God, or learn it from the example of prophets or apostles. Hence we may infer—(a) That their bold curiosity is not to be endured who intrude themselves into the determining of things, the investigation of which surpasses human wit (Rom. xii. 3). (b) Concerning religious matters nothing should be determined without a sure foundation, i.e., the Word of God, for whatever things we see relating to our salvation we find here. He who obtrudes anything not found there, hath not seen it but imagined it. (c) They, therefore, exercise tyranny over the Church who anathematize all who reject commandments of men for articles of faith. (2) The authors of this doctrine are puffed up with pride, and thence presume that their inventions are the dictates of truth. The fleshly mind denotes the animal man, or perspicacity, unenlightened by the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 14). (Ep. Davenant.) *False confidences*:—One of the saddest incidents connected with the disastrous fire at Chicago is that so many trusted not only their goods, but their lives, to buildings that were regarded as fireproof, and that they perished together. Dr. Goodall records similar incidents connected with the great fire at Constantinople in 1831, and makes a suggestive reflection: "We, like many others, fared the worse for living in houses which were considered fire-proof. In the great burning day may no such false confidence prove our ruin." (*Christian Age*.) *Humility before God*:—Thomas à Becket wore coarse sackcloth made of goats' hair from the arms to the knees, but his outer garments were remarkable for splendour and extreme costliness, to the end that, thus deceiving human eyes, he might please the sight of God. (*Hoveden*.) *How self-will may be lost*:—A person who had long practised many austerities, without finding any comfort or change of heart, was once complaining to the Bishop of Alst of his state. "Alas!" said he, "self-will and self-righteousness follow me everywhere. Only tell me when you think I shall learn to leave self. Will it be by study, or prayer, or good works?" "I think," replied the bishop, "that the place where you lose self will be that where you find your Saviour." *Not holding the Head*.—The union between head and body:—The discoveries of modern physiology have invested the apostle's language with far greater distinctness and force than it can have worn to his own contemporaries. Any exposition of the nervous system more especially reads like a commentary on his image of the relations between the body and the head. At every turn we meet

with some fresh illustration which kindles it with a flood of light. The volition communicated from the brain to the limbs, the sensations of the extremities telegraphed back to the brain, the absolute mutual sympathy between the head and the members, the instantaneous paralysis ensuing on the interruption of continuity, all these add to the completeness and life of the image. Bearing in mind the diversity of opinion among ancient physiologists, we cannot fail to be struck in the text, not only with the correctness of the image, but also with the propriety of the terms; and we are forcibly reminded that among the apostle's most intimate companions at this time was one whom he calls "the beloved physician" (iv. 14). (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) *The Head and the body*:—I. THE HEAD SUPPLIES ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO ITS MEMBERS. In worshipping angels the seducers diminished the dignity of Christ, for they took away from Him the prerogative of the Head, and incorrectly judged of His virtue and sufficiency. For Christ, the God Man, is Head of the Church. If they acknowledged Him as God they would seek from Him alone grace and salvation; if as man, they would not solicit angels to intercede for them, since Christ, our Elder Brother, sits continually at the right hand of God. Hence we may infer—1. That they who are concerned about their salvation, ought never to turn their eyes from their Head in whom alone is salvation. 2. Christians are seduced to do so, and do not hold the Head, whenever they embrace new doctrines, worship, means of salvation never prescribed by Christ and His apostles (1 Tim. vi. 3, 4). II. THE HEAD BINDS AND KNITS TOGETHER THE SAME TO ITSELF AND TO EACH OTHER. 1. The effect obtained from cleaving to Christ is that the whole body has by joints nourishment ministered. (1) The joints are—(a) The Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9). As that member is not united to the head which is not animated by the same essence as the head itself, neither is that Christian united to Christ who lacks His Spirit. (b) The gifts of the Spirit, *e.g.*, faith by which as a secondary mean we are united to Christ, and receive the remission of sins and all the grace promised in the gospel (John vi. 35). (2) The whole body thus adhering to Christ hath nourishment ministered. The Greeks called him "minister" who supplied all the apparatus to the leaders of the sacred dances. By a metaphor derived from this he is said "to supply the expenditure" who furnishes to another the things necessary for any particular object; and the word used by Paul signifies the doing of this copiously and abundantly by Christ, who supplies all the means of salvation. For whether we regard the grace making grateful, or grace gratuitously given, Christ abundantly supplies both to His Church by His Spirit. (a) Of that grace which has reference to justification and sanctification, Paul testifies (Rom. viii. 10; 2 Cor. viii. 9) that it is ministered to all His members by Christ. (b) The same with that which relates to the edification of the Church (1 Cor. xii. 7, &c.; Eph. iv. 11). (3) We may here observe—(a) That in the whole body of the Church is not a single dry member, but all are watered by streams of grace flowing from the Head. (b) To adhere to the Pope as a visible head, does not constitute membership, but adherence to Christ. Therefore the ungodly are not true members, to whatever visible Church joined, unless by the joints of the Spirit and faith they are united to Christ. (c) As to doctrine and salvation the Church is supplied from its Head, not one member from another. (d) The Papists err, who will have the Church to draw the doctrine of salvation, not alone from Christ, but from tradition; who will have her receive holiness, merit, &c., not from Christ alone, but the saints. If this be so, the text is not true. 2. By virtue of the Head, the whole body is knit together (Rom. xii. 5). The "bands" are the same—the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. For the same Spirit who unites us to Christ is the principal band by which we are united to each other (1 Cor. xii. 13), and after He is infused into all the ligaments of the Church, He enkindles in every one that excellent gift of charity which is also the firmest bond of cohesion. The other ties are diversities of gifts and callings emanating from the same Spirit (Eph. iv. 11, 12). III. THE FRUIT OF THIS UNION. 1. While united to Christ by faith, and knit together by love, the whole body of the Church increaseth in faith, love, holiness, and all saving grace. This growth is said to be of God as He is the primary agent (1 Cor. iii. 6), and because it tends to His glory as the ultimate end. 2. Observe of this increase—(1) As there is a growth in the natural body in all its parts, so in the mystical body all the members increase spiritually. (2) Not every increase is approved. A member of the body is not said to increase when it is inflated with any bad humour. So the piety of a Christian man is not increased when his mind is filled with tradition and will worship, which proceed not from the Spirit, but from the empty mind of ignorance and pride. (3) Be not deceived by

that incongruous mass of opinions of the Romish Church. The kingdom of the Pope may be increased, viz., by temporal things, traditions, superstitions, not by the knowledge of God and piety. (*Bp. Davenant.*) (See also on chap. i. 18, and Eph. iv. 16.)

Vers. 20-23. *If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world.*—*Two final tests of the false teaching.*—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S DEATH WITH CHRIST. 1. To Paul the Cross of Christ was the altar on which the oblation had been offered which took away his sin, and because of that the law of his own life, and the power which assimilated him to his Lord. (1) We talk of an old man being dead to youthful follies and passions and ambitions, and we mean that they have ceased to interest him, that he is separated from, and insensible to them. So if we have got hold of Christ as our Saviour, that will deaden us to all which was our life. (2) Strong emotion, too, makes us insensible to things around. Many a man amid the excitement of the battlefield "receives, but recks not of the wound." Absorption of thought and interest leads to "absence of mind" when surroundings are entirely unfelt. Higher tastes drive out lower ones, as some great stream turned into a new channel will sweep it clear of mud. So if we are joined to Christ He will fill our souls with strong emotions and interests which will deaden our sensitiveness to things around. 2. To what shall we die if we are Christians? (1) To sin (Rom. vi. 11). (2) To self (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). (3) To the law (Rom. vii. 6). (4) To the world (Gal. vi. 14). Here it is to "the rudiments of the world" (ver. 8). Elementary precepts, fit for babes, moving in the region of the material. Why then, triumphantly asks Paul, do you subject yourselves to ordinances (ver. 4) such as "handle not, nor taste, nor touch," vehement reiterations of the ascetic teachers with an increasing intolerance—don't lay hold of, don't touch with the tip of your finger. So asceticism grows by indulgence. And, then, the whole thing is out of date, and a misapprehension of the genius of Christianity. Man's work in religion is ever to confine it to the surface. Christ's work is to focus it on the inner man of the heart, knowing that if that be right the visible will come right. 3. Paul goes on to show (ver. 22) that these meats and drinks, of which so much is said, are perishable. You cannot use them without using them up. Is it fitting for men who have died with Christ to this perishable world to make so much of its perishing things? But we may widen the thought so as to make it include sybaritic luxury as well as asceticism. Dives in his purple and the monk in his hair shirt, both make too much of "what they should put on." The one with his feasts and the other with his fasts, both think too much of what they shall eat and drink. The man who lives on high with his Lord puts all these things in their right place. There are things which do not perish with the using. All Christlike graces grow with exercise. 4. The final inconsistency between the Christian position and these practical errors is glanced at in "after the commandments of men." A quotation, used by our Lord, from Isa. xxix. 13. It is not fitting for those in union with Christ to be under the authority of men. Here is the true democracy of the Christian society—"Ye were redeemed with a price; be not servants of men." We are bound to take our orders from one Master. II. THE FAILURE OF THE FALSE TEACHING TO ATTAIN ITS END (ver. 23). 1. The apostle admits that it had a show of wisdom, and was very fascinating. It had the look—(1) Of devotion and zealous worship; but on closer examination it is the indulgence of the will and not surrender to God. They are not worshipping Him as He has appointed, and therefore not at all. Whether offered in a cathedral or a barn, in a cope or a fustian jacket, such service is not accepted. (2) Of humility. It looked very humble to say, We cannot suppose that such flesh-encompassed creatures can have fellowship with God; but it was a great deal more humble to take Him at His word and allow him to settle possibilities. (3) Of discipline. Any asceticism is a great deal more to men's taste than abandoning self. They will rather stick hooks in their backs than give up their sins or yield up their wills. Our poor human nature travesties Christ's solemn command to deny ourselves into doing something unpleasant to recommend ourselves to God. 2. The conclusive condemnation, however, lies in the fact that they "are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh" (see on ver. 18). This is one great end of all moral and spiritual discipline, and if practical regulations do not secure it they are worthless. By "flesh" is meant the entire unrenewed self which thinks, and feels, and wills apart from God. To indulge and satisfy it is to die, to slay and suppress it is to live. A man may be keeping the whole round of "ordinances" and seven devils may be in his heart. They distinctly tend to foster some of the "works of

the flesh," such as self-righteousness and uncharitableness, and they as distinctly fail to subdue any of them. A man may stand on a pillar like Simon Stylites for years and be none the better. The world and the flesh are willing that Christianity should shrivel into a religion of prohibitions and ceremonials, because all manner of vices and meannesses may thrive and breed under them like scorpions under stones. There is only one thing that will put the collar on the neck of the animal within us, and that is the power of the indwelling Christ. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Ritualism described and condemned*.—I. THE APPEAL.—1. Was to their position and profession as Christians. They had died with Christ, and, therefore, to that which was fulfilled in His death. 2. Was based upon their Christian liberty. What had they to do with those things from which they were delivered by Christ's death—the mere material alphabet of religion? It was as ridiculous as if an educated man should go back to his spelling book; or a liberated slave fear his task master. 3. Described the character of the bondage of which they were in danger. "Touch not," &c., are not Paul's words, but the mottoes of the heretical teachers, and refer to distinctions in meats and drinks. True Christians ought to be far above the region of such carnal commandments, for to them all things are pure, and every creature of God good. Moreover, they perish in the using, and how then can they benefit the soul? (Rom. xiv. 17; 1 Cor. viii. 8). And lastly they are based on human authority, whereas the Christian owes allegiance to none but Christ. II. THE ARGUMENT. 1. The ordinances are pretentious. They have a show of wisdom. (1) In will worship, or some mode of worship God has not required. (2) In humility. But it is an affectation of lowliness which cannot look up directly to God in Christ, but thinks it necessary to find some subordinate mediators. Such prevails now. (3) In neglecting the body. The fleshly tabernacle may indeed be weakened without the slightest effect in conquering any sinful tendency in the soul. (4) How these rudiments of the world had a show of wisdom is not difficult to see. To go beyond the Divine requirement in self-denial, and do works of supererogation has the appearance of magnanimity. 2. These ordinances are really worthless. (1) Negatively—"Not in any honour"—they are of no spiritual efficacy. (2) Positively—they gratify the flesh, and prop up the fleshly mind with notions of its self-righteousness and sufficiency. Lessons: 1. The vanity and error of asceticism. 2. The sacredness of Christian liberty. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The ceremonial in religion*.—I. IS SIMPLY ELEMENTARY. "The rudiments of the world." It is in its nature transitory and imperfect. It conveys knowledge but in part; and when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part is done away. II. IS UNWORTHY THE SUBMISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER. The believer is liberated from the slavery of the ceremonial. III. IN ITS MAIN FEATURES IS UNIVERSALLY THE SAME. 1. It is the same in its dictatorial prohibitions. "Touch not," &c. 2. It is the same in its undue exaltation of the external and the transitory, "Which perish," &c. 3. It is the same in its human origin. "After the commandments and doctrines of men." The ceremonial in religion is an accumulation of the commandments and doctrines of men. Depending on human authority, it has no value in itself; and when it is made obligatory in order to salvation, it is an insult to Christ, and an intolerable servitude to man. IV. CAN NEVER SATISFY THE MANY-SIDED WANTS OF HUMANITY. 1. It pretends to a wisdom it does not possess. (1) In self-imposed methods of worship. The enthusiast for the ceremonial argues that he who only does what God positively demands does only what is common; but he who goes beyond reaches a higher degree of saintliness. (2) In the affectation of a spurious humility. It is a pretence of wisdom to renounce all worldly splendour, and profess to live in poverty and seclusion. (3) In an unjustifiable indifference to bodily wants. The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and is to be honoured, and all its just wants satisfied, in order that its best powers may be employed in the service of God. But the abuse of the body in starvation and neglect is a folly and a sin. 2. It is of no value in preventing the indulgence of the flesh. "Not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." The radical error of the ascetic lies in his belief that evil resides in matter. Not the body, but in the soul is the source of sin. (*G. Burrows*.) *Religion does not consist in bodily neglect*.—John Wesley, before his conversion, anxiously seeking rest for his soul, proposed to himself a solitary life in one of the Yorkshire dales. His wise mother interposed, admonishing him prophetically "that God had better work for him to do." He travelled some miles to consult "a serious man." "The Bible knows nothing of a solitary religion," says this good man, and Wesley turned about his face toward that great career which was to make his history a part of the history of his country and of the world. (*R. Stevens*.)

The soul's true freedom in Christ alone.—Let me tell you again my old story of the eagle. For many months it pined and drooped in its cage, and seemed to have forgotten that it was of the lineage of the old plumed kings of the forest and the mountain; and its bright eye faded, and its strong wings drooped, and its kingly crest was bowed, and its plumes were torn and soiled amid the bars and dust of its prison-house. So, in pity of its forlorn life, we carried its cage out to the open air, and broke the iron wire and flung wide the lowly door; and slowly, falteringly, despondingly, it crept forth to the sultry air of that cloudy summer noon and looked listlessly about it. But just then, from a rift in an overhanging cloud, a golden sunbeam flashed upon the scene. And it was enough. Then it lifted its loyal crest, the dim eye blazed again, the soiled plumes unfolded and rustled, the strong wings moved themselves, with a rapturous cry it sprang heavenward. Higher, higher, in broader, braver circles it mounted toward the firmament, and we saw it no more as it rushed through the storm-clouds and soared to the sun. And would, O ye winged spirits! who dream and pine in this poor earthly bondage, that only one ray from the blessed Sun of Righteousness might fall on you this hour! for then would there be the flash of a glorious eye and a cry of rapture, and a sway of exulting wings, as another redeemed and risen spirit sprang heavenward unto God! (C. Wadsworth, D.D.)

CHAPTER III.

VERS. 1-4. If ye then be risen with Christ.—*Risen with Christ*.—There is no doubt a supposition in the "if." The apostle takes it for granted that Christians were raised together with Christ, and admonishes them, therefore, to evince it in their life. The resurrection of Christ is represented as giving to His people—**I. A NEW AIM.** Man is born to aspire, and when he rises with the victorious Christ he aspires to heavenly things. The new quest is for righteousness, holiness, patience, devotion, love, and self-sacrifice. **II. A NEW HEART.** The affections are to be set on things above, not as in the unregenerate state on earthly things. It might be possible to seek heavenly things merely in obedience to authority or convictions of duty, but that we may be raised above that, we are encouraged to set our whole heart and mind upon Divine realities. **III. A NEW LIFE.** Dead to the world, they have nevertheless a resurrection life hid with Christ in God. And their earthly life of duty and endurance corresponds with the secret fountain from which it flows. **IV. A NEW HOPE** which—**1.** Respects Christ—"He shall be manifested." It is the blessed hope, the glorious appearing. He shall come the second time without sin unto salvation. **2.** Respects Christians. Spiritually raised with Christ, they will share His revelation. (*Family Churchman*.) **1.** St. Paul has just been dealing with a system of repression and abstinence which had a vain show of wisdom, but did not touch the spring of action, and was therefore of no value in resistance to indulgence of the flesh. Would you know, he asks, how you may be lifted above the tyranny of sense, and be initiated into the true secret of temperance and chastity? To go back to a system of bondage fit only for the childhood of the race is to forget the characteristic feature of Christianity, which is the elevating of the whole man into a new region of thought and action, in virtue of union with One who has ascended into that heaven where your true life is hid with Him in God. **2.** This is Paul's great doctrine. (1) He seems almost to picture a pursuit of the sinner by the Avenger of blood which is disappointed by his reception into the City of Refuge. "That I may win Christ and befound in Him," so that when I am looked for only Christ is to be seen. (2) But inclusion in Christ is more than for safety, it is for comfort in trouble, strength in weakness, life in death. **3.** This union is expressed in a retrospective way. If I am in Christ I am in Him as that which He is now, as one who has died, risen and ascended; and when He died I died, and when God exalted Him He set me with Him. Henceforth I must live the risen life, and live above the world as one who has done with its cares, toils, and lying vanities. "He that is dead is freed from sin;" he that is raised must mind the things above, have them for his interest, employment, study, affection, so that when the veil is removed which now hides Him we may be manifested with Him.

I. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IS A FACT, as much of history as of the faith of Christendom, and attested by convincing evidence on the part of unexceptionable witnesses. II. OUR RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST IS A FACT SPIRITUAL, BUT REAL, AND CONTAINED IN CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. To some minds a spiritual fact is a self-contradiction. But a spiritual fact is, above all other kinds, a factor in history. It sets in motion influences which change the face of nations, working those miracles of good in comparison with which the rise and fall of dynasties are vanity. III. This resurrection is EFFECTED BY UNION WITH CHRIST. The word "union" is used very loosely. We speak of a combination of a few thousands for a purpose salutary or mischievous as union, little thinking what the term is which we take in vain. But this union is one which man cannot have with man. It is a union of spirit, and such that the spirit of the Saviour not only influences the spirit of the man from outside, as our mind is wrought upon by speech or books, but from within. "He shall be in you." IV. HOW AND WHEN IS THIS UNION REALIZED. Paul says that all we who are baptized into Christ, there and then put on Christ. "We were buried with Him by our baptism into death." If this realization of Christ has not yet been given us, let us not take refuge in names and forms, saying, "I have it as a thing of course, for I have been baptized." If you have it you will know it; if you have it not yet it is yours by right. Baptism is at any rate the promise of God, to each one, of his grace and acceptance in proportion to the need and entreaty. V. THIS UNION IS BETWEEN CHRIST IN HEAVEN AND US. That Christ is there need not repel any one from seeking Him. "He ascended that He might fill all things." When He was upon earth He did not even fill Palestine. Now by virtue of His exaltation He can fill every soul with Himself. VI. THEREFORE WE MUST SEEK THE THINGS ABOVE. 1. The contrast is to things on earth—harassing anxiety, importunate vanity, consuming ambition, exciting pleasure, shameful self-indulgence. The things above are the realities of which these are counterfeits, the grand and satisfying pursuits of which these are the phantoms, things which bring comfort and peace and rest to the soul. 2. Every honest searching of the heart to root out what God hates, every earnest effort after forgiveness, every aspiration after a Divine life, every sincere endeavour, is a seeking after the things above. 3. By degrees there shall be in every such seeker a change of places between earth and heaven. From seeking he shall rise to thinking the things above, and when at last the door opens, and he is called in to see the King in His beauty, he shall find himself in no strange scene or company. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Christ and the higher nature* :—That there is a higher life which we may and ought to live, all men, in whom there is any religion, feel; and what is peculiar to the gospel is not the bare idea of this life, but the revelation of its character, power, and attainment. I. THE NATURE OF THIS HIGHER LIFE. 1. It is "above." But is not this just what has been objected to—that Christianity concerns itself with another world rather than with this? And is not this very exaltation a weakness and a delusion. What nobler ideal can there be than to make the present life better. But Christ's ideal was a kingdom, in our hearts, it is true, yet "of heaven," not of earth. It was, in short, a higher Divine life that was to irradiate our poor human life, and to glorify it. It was no development from below, but a revelation from on high, and without this Christianity has no meaning. Cut away its Divine side, and it is destroyed. 2. This life is not merely in the future, although it embraces it. It concerns itself with another world, yet it does not despise things on the earth. The kingdom is now, and not to be reached after death, and the things above are to be possessed now. These are the things of which the apostle speaks presently, "kindness," &c. Spiritual qualities. The apostle does not contrast heaven and earth as places, nor set the future life against the present, but the spiritual against the natural, the carnal against the Divine. The higher life takes up the present and glorifies it, and finds its development in every variety of well-doing. It embraces every real virtue, and beautifies and ennobles the life that now is as well as that to come. II. ITS SOURCE AND MOTIVE POWER. It is no process of self-culture or moral discipline. It springs only from the living root Christ. It is a new life rising on the extinction of the old life of self. The same Divine power which raised Christ from the dead is supposed to live and work in Christians. But out of Christ there is no higher life in the Christian sense. But is this so? Are there not many beautiful characters who never heard of Christ; and are there not many Christians far from stainless? Yes, but—1. The Christian type of character is to be estimated by its ideal, as rendered by the highest examples, and not by the conduct of all professors. It is true that the best Christians but feebly represent Christ, yet where is there any list of worthies to be

compared with the roll of Christian saints? And all such have declared their strength for good to lie in the fact that their life was hid with Christ in God. 2. If there is goodness where the name of Christ is unknown, or which refuses to acknowledge Him, let us not deny it. If we must have a theory the true one is that all goodness, even when seeming to be apart from Christ, has really its root in Him. (*Principal Tulloch.*) *The hidden life:*—At the close of the preceding chapter St. Paul exposes the error of those who would bring back Christians to the rudiments of the world; but with that rapidity of thought which is characteristic of him, he passes on to other rudiments—everything that is loved and cultivated by the flesh—and makes no distinction between rites and worldliness, resting on the similarity between them. I. THE DIVINE LIFE PRODUCES DYING TO THE WORLD. It would be wrong to hold the reverse, of course. If you are risen with Christ, your life is no longer here below, but where Christ is. Here comes a series of transformations. 1. *Spiritual death.* You were dead in sins, but Christ has raised you (see Col. ii. 12, 13; Eph. ii. 5, 6; 1 Pet. i. 3). 2. In the very act of raising you Christ has subjected you to a new death—to the world. These two facts correspond as the projections of a coin do with the depressions of the mould. Resurrection is the *relievo* of the coin; it produces the void which is death: for our life cannot be everywhere; if it is in heaven it is not on the earth (ver. 4). II. It is true that **WE LIVE HERE BY OUR NECESSARY LIFE, BUT THE BEST PART OF OURSELVES IS ELSEWHERE.** We live where our heart is. The prisoner lives nowhere less than in his cell. You say of the person you passionately love, "She has stolen my heart." When any one is indifferent to his surroundings we say, "His heart is elsewhere." It is with the heart we live our real life; "out of it are the issues of life." It can restrict itself to earthly things, but it can also have its conversation in heaven. III. **WE MUST BE QUITE CLEAR AS TO THE MEANING OF THE WORDS "ABOVE" AND "BELOW," "HEAVEN" AND "EARTH."** Earth and heaven here are not exactly places and times, but principles called after the place and time of their perfect realization. To detach ourselves from earth is not to detach ourselves from activity, but to detach our hearts from earthly principles, and attach them to the principles to be realized in heaven. To fulfil social duties, &c., under God's eye is not to do earthly but heavenly things. And so the Christian becomes attached to the place and time, where the true principle finds its realization, and detached from that where the false principle is realized. Nevertheless, we must not be drawn into a false spirituality, a selfish separation from earth while attached to it in affection. It is an admirable thing when he who is weaned from life appreciates it; for he despises what in it is contemptible, and esteems in it what is really worth esteem. IV. **THE LIFE WEANED FROM EARTH IS HIDDEN FROM THE WORLD, AND DOES NOT SEEM LIFE.** For life does not consist in the involuntary fact commonly called by the name. The world judges, and rightly from its premises, that visible things are alone worthy of attachment, that a man who does not attend to them does not live. And yet everything is not obscure in regard to the Christian. He is unknown and yet known. It is impossible to see a Christian without saying, "There is something peculiar there! His life declares him to be a Christian." But because this life is not understood it is denied. The natural man sees something, but he does not regard it as life. And yet the Christian lives; he is not an anchorite. He has everything that others have as men, but as a Christian more. Worldlings may consider sin as essential to humanity; but it mutilates a man, Christianity increases him, and faith takes away sin. As a man the Christian mixes himself up in the business of life, for the earth belongs to his God; but in spite of this he is not understood, because the common aim which all pursue is with him only a means of attaining a higher end. And from misunderstanding to contempt and calumination the distance is not great. Whatever we may do in order to have peace with all men we shall never succeed unless we walk on the same footing. Thus the Christian is treated as dead, and with the same repugnance as is felt towards a dead man in the physical sense. V. **WHAT MOTIVES HAS THE CHRISTIAN TO CONSENT TO THIS, AND TO ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES?** 1. In reality he lives, and God knows that he lives, and that is enough. Those small and charming flowers which bloom in the desert or on the mountain-top will fold up their leaves without being seen by any human eye. God sees them, that is enough. In the Middle Ages unknown workmen spent their lives in rearing glorious cathedrals; some, working in positions dangerous and difficult of access, carved wonders of art and patience which are not seen except as you climb to the tops of columns. It was enough that God saw their work, and

that throughout the ages a continual hymn should rise to Him from the midst of the stone. So with the Christian. 2. What grand compensation. Obscurity does not hinder greatness. (1) A great work has been wrought for and in the Christian. He is a king, although disguised. (2) There is greatness in what he does by the strength of God, subjugation of passions, resignation, &c. 3. But the Christian will appear when Christ appears, and under what glorious circumstances (Phil. ii. 10, 11; Matt. x. 32; xiii. 43; Dan. xii. 3). (*A. Vinet, D.D.*) *When will the world grow better?*—The world is full of lamentations. The times are bad; business is stagnant. There is no confidence, but everywhere mistrust and discontent. Everybody says that this state of things cannot last. There are plenty of social quacks. We have been flooded with laws for improving the conditions of life; but the confusion is only the greater. New ecclesiastical laws have been made, but entire classes are alienated from the Church. Then when will the world be better? When each one of us begins to grow better himself; and if any one could devise the means of bringing about that result it would be of more use than all modern experiments. But we have the means in the well-tried Word of God and its Divine powers. The world will grow better. I. WHEN WE DIE AND RISE WITH CHRIST. 1. There was a time when a great deal was said about the moral improvement of the race. If men laid aside their grosser sins and endeavoured to live virtuously, all would be well. The theory was not confirmed by the facts. To-day men have fallen into a similar error. Culture is now the Saviour. All honour to it; but history proves that a man may be learned in every branch of knowledge, and yet be utterly bad. 2. One of the most absurd suppositions which lies at the root of most modern experiments is that human nature is good. The Scripture doctrine to the contrary, though much decried, is a fact of which every parent can convince himself. If the world is to be made better a commencement must be made with the inner life of each man. The old nature must die, and a new one arise, or you may as soon build the top storey of a house before you have laid the foundation. 3. Accordingly in Scripture this renewal is everywhere insisted upon. Ye are dead and ye have risen, and since ye are risen seek the things that are above. It is not by mere accident that this renewing is thus described, and in connection with the death and resurrection of Christ. There was needed for it a spiritual energy which does not exist in us, but is in Christ, the risen One. 4. This new life is by virtue of a personal surrender by faith to Christ (chap. ii. 12). Thus we die to sin and the world. A new purpose is disclosed, viz., to please God and enjoy fellowship with Him; a new rule of thought and action—the will of God; a new impelling principle—the Holy Spirit; and thus we come with our whole personal life into a higher order—the heavenly. What further proof do we need that when this happens things are better? II. WHEN HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS FILLS ALL HEARTS. 1. That which is below is the earthly world, with its tangible but perishable things; and the more the pursuit of them grows to a longing after them, the worse will it be for the inner and outer life. For this lower world, however beautiful, can never satisfy the heart, and the void is filled with base passions or wild schemes. 2. The world above is closed against the earthly mind. The natural man has no eye for its glory, no ear for its language. Nevertheless it is the real world, where Christ is seated, its light, life, and supreme attraction. When the mind is fixed on this the earthly life is glorified. For though Christ is exalted He dwells on earth with His faithful ones, and, therefore, brings heaven down below. Attachment to Him does not incapacitate us for the business of life, but only makes us independent of what is sinful and selfish, and teaches us to serve God in all things. 3. Who can doubt, therefore, that this heavenly-mindedness would be better for the home, the shop, the nation. III. WHEN CHRIST SHALL BE REVEALED. Now the Christian's life is hid. The world understands not its nature, power, or effects. But it shall be manifest at the appearing of Christ—and then in its full perfection. It will indeed be better then. (*G. Maurer.*) *Of the resurrection*:—I. TWO SUPPOSITIONS. 1. Christ's resurrection. This needs no "if." It is a certainty. Three hundred years the world opposed it, and ever since has supposed it. But it is not supposed by itself, and ours inferred, but ours supposed likewise. And as they are so closely linked that one supposition serveth for them, so they are woven together that one preposition (with) holdeth them. 2. Our resurrection. (1) "If ye." Why only to a certain "ye"? Concerns it not all? As Christ died so is He risen for all, and all shall rise. Yes, but not all to the "right hand," a good many to the left. The resurrection reaches to all; this only to such as "seek," and "set their minds." (2) If ye "be risen." Is the tense right? For when we hear of the resurrection we are carried to the last day. He

rose, we say, we *shall* rise. But here the resurrection is already. Fall we in, then, with those who say that the resurrection is past (2 Tim. ii. 18)? No; but we believe that as there is one to come of the body, so there is one which we are to pass here, of the mind's. There are the first and second resurrections (Rev. xx. 6); and all the good or evil of the second depends on the passing or not passing the first. "Christ is risen" is not enough, nay is nothing at all, if He be risen without us. 3. "If." Is it so? If He is risen cry to Him to draw thee, as He said He would (John xii. 32); the soul first as being from above, so the more easily drawn to things above, and then with itself the soul to elevate the flesh. II. THE DOUBLE INFERENCE—"Seek"; "Set your minds." 1. The two acts jointly; for disjoined they may not be. One is little worth without the other. (1) There be that "seek," and be very busy in it, and yet savour (Matt. xvi. 23, same word) not the things of God. Some possessed with false principles fall a seeking; zealous, but without true knowledge to fix their minds aright (Prov. xix. 2). "The mind misled will set the affections awry." Look but to the close of chapter ii. Then they seek so as they will not taste, handle, or touch. Some seek as to worship angels, and spare not their own bodies, and yet with all their seeking not "risen with Christ." (2) On the other side there be that "savour Christ, but seek themselves" (Phil. ii. 21). They have knowledge competent, but no endeavour; they sit still and seek not. (3) So that both may be kept together, "seek" and "set your minds" both. As in the body a rheumatic head spoils the stomach, and a distempered stomach the head, so here. The mind mistaking misleads the affections, and a wrong-set affection puts the mind out of frame. 2. The acts severally. (1) Seek; he shall not stumble or hit upon it unawares. If the Saviour knew the way well, it is hard to hit (Matt. vii. 14). Pains and diligence are requisite. It were great folly when we see daily things without travail will not be come by, to think that things above will drop into our lap. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" and went his way before he had the answer. He never deserved to find what truth was. (2) But we shall never seek as we should unless we "set our minds." For a man will never kindly seek that he hath no mind to. That we may seek things above we must prize them as a silver mine (Prov. iii. 14), as a treasure hid in a field (Matt. xiii. 44), and sell all to compass them. Then, he that seeks should have as well eyes to discern, as feet to go about it, *i.e.*, have knowledge. To seek we know not what is but to err, and never find that we seek for. Four things are in this. (1) To set the mind, not the fancy, and seek as many do with no other ground but their own conceits. Yet seek they will, and have all the world follow them, and have nothing to follow after but their own folly. So as being very idiots they take themselves for the only men who ever had wisdom to know what to seek or how. (2) But it is not an act of the understanding alone. It is to set our mind not only to know, but to mind it; not only to distinguish tastes, but in and with the taste to feel such delight as will lead us to seek it again more earnestly. (3) So to savour it that to seek it is our wisdom (Deut. iv. 6). To think when ye are about the things above that you are about the wisest action of your lives. (4) Not the contemplative wisdom only, but the active. To show that not only our grounds for judgment, but our rules for action, are to be set thence. What will He who sitteth at the right hand of God say or think of what I am about? May I offer it to Him? Will He help me forward with it, and reward me for it? 3. The order. "Seek" first—(1) To teach us that it is the first thing we are to have a care of (Matt. vi. 33). (2) Because there is more need of diligence in this business than aught else. Always we have more ado to quicken the affection than to inform the judgment. III. THE TWO REFERENCES or objects of hope. Rest—"sitteth"; glory—"at the right hand of God." 1. The things we are to seek, &c., are "above." (1) To do this we shall be easily entreated. We yield, presently, to seek to be above others in favour, honour, place, and power. All would be above, "bramble" (Judg. ix. 15) and all, and nothing is too high for us, not even the "right hand" (Matt. xx. 21). (2) The apostle saw clearly that we should err here, hence he tells us that "above" is not on earth, but in heaven. So the fault he finds is that our "above" is too low. (a) The very frame of body has an upward tendency, and bids us look thither. And that way should our soul make. It came from thence, and thither it should draw again, and we do but crook our souls against their nature when we set them to seek nothing but here below. (b) And if nature would have us no moles, grace would have us mount up as eagles—"Where the body is" (Luke xvii. 37). For contrary to the philosopher's sentence, "things above concern us not;" they chiefly concern us. 2. "Above" is Christ, and with Him the things we of all others seek for. (1) Rest (Psa. lv. 6).

And it is not the body's concern so much as the soul's. The soul is from above, and never finds rest but in her own place (Psa. cxvi. 17; Heb. iii. 11, 18-19). But we seek glory more, and for it we are content to deprive ourselves of rest, which otherwise we love well enough. For no rest will give us full content but at the right hand. Where are they to be found? Not here, and therefore it is folly to seek them here. In this troublesome tumultuous place there is no rest (Mic. ii. 10) nor glory, for in our gardens of delight there are worms, and spiders in kings' palaces. And whatever we fancy we have of either it is at the expense of the other. Rest is a thing inglorious, and glory a thing restless. 3. But both are united above, where we "sit at the right hand of God" with Christ; and then we have them not so that our rest may be sometimes broken, and our glory sometimes tarnished, but both perfectly and for ever. (*Bishop Andrewes.*) *The resurrection of Christ an argument for seeking things above:—*I. THE DUTY TO WHICH WE ARE EXHORTED. Affirmatively, to seek and set our affections on things above; negatively, not on things on the earth. 1. The act. In "seek" and "set your affections" are comprehended (1) An act of the understanding. Heaven and the way of getting there should be much in our thoughts. (2) An act of our affections, that we love and desire the things above proportionately to their excellence. (3) Activity and industry in the prosecution of these things, if by any means we may attain them. When our understandings have dwelt long enough on our heavenly treasures as to work on our affections, these, like so many springs of motion, will set our endeavours on work for the obtaining what we so much love and desire. (4) A clear preference of the things above to the things of the earth when they come in competition. "Set your affections" is often used for taking part with one side when two parties or interests come into competition. So when heaven and earth, the interests of your souls and of your bodies, a holy and a sinful course come into competition, choose the better part (ver. 5). 2. The objects of this act. (1) God in Christ. (2) The blessed state of glory in the next life. (3) The dispositions to be acquired and the duties to be performed as necessary qualifications for the obtaining this happiness. II. THE FORCE OF THE ARGUMENTS USED TO PERSUADE US TO IT. 1. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek," &c., i.e., (1) If ye believe in the resurrection of Christ. This was the great seal of His ministry and confirmation of His doctrine: and one great branch of His doctrine was that we should lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. (2) If we resemble Him in His resurrection. He is our pattern in His saving acts as well as in His virtues. So as He died for sin we must die to it; if He rose we must rise into newness of life; if He ascended so should we in our hearts (Col. ii. 12; Rom. vi. 4-5, 9-11). (3) If we are partakers of the power of His resurrection (John xi. 25; Eph. i. 19; Phil. iii. 10; Col. ii. 13). 2. "Seek the things which are above where Christ sitteth" (Luke xxiv. 26; Eph. i. 20-22). (1) The force of this argument is from the relation between the head and the members. The members have an affection for the head which makes them aspire heavenwards; and the head has an influence upon the members (John xii. 32-33). (2) The gift of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of Christ's ascension, and it is by His operation upon our hearts that our affections are fixed on heavenly things, as against the counter allurements of the world. 3. The transcendent excellence of heavenly things above things of the earth, which the apostle intimates by the opposition, "Set your affections," &c. (*Archbishop Tillotson.*) *Following the risen Christ:—*I. OUR SPIRITUAL RISING WITH CHRIST. The "if" is used logically, not theologically, by way of argument, and not by way of doubt. 1. We were dead in sin, but having believed in Christ we have been quickened by the Holy Ghost, and we are dead no longer. We remember the first sensation of life, how it seemed to tingle just as drowning persons when coming back to life suffer great pain. Conviction was wrought in us, and a dread of judgment, and a sense of condemnation, but these were tokens of life, but that life gradually deepened until the eye was opened, and the restored hand stretched itself out, the foot began to move in the way of obedience, and the heart felt the sweet glow of love within. 2. There has been wrought in us a wonderful change. Before regeneration our soul was as our body will be when it dies. (1) Sown in corruption. In some cases it did not appear on the surface; in others it was something fearful to look upon. Now the new life has overcome it, for it is an incorruptible seed, and liveth for ever. (2) In dishonour. Sin is a shameful thing; but "behold what manner of love" (1 John iii. 1). "Since thou wast precious in my sight," &c. "Unto you which believe He is an honour." (3) In weakness. When we were the captives of sin we could do nothing good; but "when we were without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Now we know the power of His resurrection" (John i. 12; Phil. iv. 13). (4) A natural body. Aforetime we were natural men, and discerned not the things of the Spirit of God. Now a spirit has been created in us which lives for spiritual objects.

3. In consequence of receiving this life and undergoing this change the things of the world become a tomb to us. To a dead man a tomb is as good a dwelling as he can want; but the moment he lives he cannot endure it. So when we were natural men earthly things contented us. (1) A merely outward religion satisfied us; a dead form suited a dead soul. Judaism pleased those who put themselves under its yoke; traditions, ordinances make pretty furniture for a dead man's chamber; but when eternal life enters the soul they are flung off. A living man demands such garments as are suitable for life. 2. Merely carnal objects become as the grave to us, whether sinful pleasures or selfish gains. They are as a coffin to the renewed man: he cries for liberty. 4. We are wholly raised from the dead in a spiritual sense. Our Lord did not have His head quickened while His feet were in the sepulchre. So we have been renewed in every part. We have received, although it be in its infancy, a perfect life in Christ Jesus; our ear is awakened, our eye opened, our feet nimble. 5. We are so raised that we shall die no more. "Christ being raised, death hath no more dominion," &c. So we.

II. LET US EXERCISE THE NEW MAN IN SUITABLE PURSUITS. 1. Let us leave the sepulchre. (1) The vault of a mere outward religion, and worship God in Spirit and in truth. (2) The vault of carnal enjoyments. These ought to be as dead things to the man who is risen with Christ. 2. Let us hasten to forget every evil as our Lord hastened to leave the tomb. He made the three days as short as possible; so let there be no lingering and hankering after the flesh. 3. As our Lord spent a short season with His disciples, we are to spend our forty days in holy service. (1) In greater seclusion from the world and greater nearness to heaven. (2) In testimony, even as He manifested Himself, to the resurrection power of God. (3) In comforting the saints. (4) In setting everything in order for the furtherance of His kingdom. 4. Let our whole minds ascend to heaven with Christ; not a stray thought. (1) Because we need heavenly things, prize them, and hope to gain them. (2) After heavenly things, faith, hope, &c. (3) Heavenly objects—the glory of God, not your own; the good of man. (4) Heavenly joys. Your treasure is above, let your hearts be with it. 5. What a magnet Christ should be. Where should the wife's thoughts be but with her absent and beloved one? (1) Christ is sitting, for His work is done; rise and rest with Him. (2) At the right hand of God, in the place of honour and favour.

III. LET THE NEW LIFE DELIGHT ITSELF WITH SUITABLE OBJECTS. "Have a relish for things above"; "study them industriously"; "set your mind on them." What are they? 1. God Himself. "Delight thyself in the Lord." What is all the world if He be gone; and if you have Him, what though all the world be gone? 2. Jesus who is God, but truly man. Meditate on His Divine Person, His perfect work, &c. 3. The New Jerusalem of the Church triumphant. 4. Heaven, the place of holiness after sin, of rest after work, of riches after poverty, of health and life after sickness and death. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Risen with Christ.—I. CHRIST IS RISEN. This appears—(1) From the Holy Scriptures. (2) From eye-witnesses. (3) From the testimony of the Spirit. II. CHRISTIANS ARE RISEN WITH CHRIST. What is this? (Eph. ii. 5-6; Col. ii. 12, 20.) 1. Christ is our Head, and a public Person (Eph. v. 23). 2. Whatever He did, He did it not in a private but a public capacity, and therefore we are looked upon as doing it in Him (Isa. liii. 5). 3. Hence, when He arose, we arose in Him and with Him. 4. Metaphorically we rise from sin. III. BEING RISEN WITH CHRIST WE ARE TO SEEK THE THINGS ABOVE. 1. What things? (1) The perfection of graces. (2) The society of angels. (3) The vision of Christ (John xvii. 24). (4) The enjoyment of God; consisting (a) in our clear knowledge of Him (John xvii. 3). (b) Perfect love to Him. (c) Infinite expressions of love from Him (Zeph. iii. 17). 2. How seek them? It implies—(1) Our knowledge of them. (2) Our love for them. (3) Our labouring to be instated in them (Matt. vi. 33). IV. WHY SHOULD THEY WHO ARE RISEN WITH CHRIST SEEK THE THINGS ABOVE? 1. Because now all things else are below them. 2. Their inheritance is there. V. USE. 1. Motives. (1) The things below are unsuitable, the things above suitable. (2) They empty and deceiving; these full and satisfying; nay, there is more happiness in seeking heaven than enjoying earth. (3) They uncertain to be attained; these certain if sought for. (4) They mixed with troubles, these pure comforts. (5) They transient and fading, these perpetual and everlasting. 2. Means. (1) Exercise graces—repentance, faith (Heb. xi. 5-6). (2) Perform duties. (Bishop Beveridge.) *The Christian risen with*

Christ :—I. A GLORIOUS TRUTH SUPPOSED—that believers are risen with Christ. This involves—1. A firm belief in His resurrection. This doctrine is of paramount importance as the principal evidence of Christianity. Every other doctrine hangs upon it. If Christ be not risen, where—(1) Our access to God. (2) Our success in prayer. (3) Our hope of pardon. (4) Our holy aspirations. (5) Our bright prospects (see 1 Cor. xv. 14–19). 2. A personal experience of its power. (1) In the renewing of the mind. (2) The changing of the heart. (3) The quickening of the spirit. (4) Newness of life. 3. A well-grounded anticipation of conformity with His resurrection. (1) Spiritual life with Him now in heaven. (2) Completeness of bodily and soul likeness to Him by and by. II. A MOMENTOUS DUTY REQUIRED. 1. The superiority of its object—"the things above." (1) The glorious state of happiness in reserve for believers in heaven. (2) The sublime realities of religion that belong by way of preparation to the heavenly state—growth in grace and knowledge; spirituality of mind, holiness, devotion to God, love to His people. How superior to the pleasures of the ungodly. 2. The extent of its application. It implies more than a belief in things above, and includes—(1) A persuasion of their value. We shall not be induced to seek what we do not value. Worldly men underrate them: but rising with Christ brings spiritual perception, by which they are viewed in the light of eternity. (2) A fixing of the mind on them—choosing them in preference to sublunary things. The wisdom of the Christian's choice will be seen when the universe is in ruins. "The things which are seen are temporal." (3) A diligent pursuit after them in the use of the appointed means. Beware of the fascinations of the world. Cultivate heavenly dispositions. 3. The power of its motive. (1) In general. The principles we profess call for it; the profession we make demands it; love, gratitude, our own interest and God's glory, all urge us to it. (2) In particular. Mark the Person—Christ. He is over all. Mark the posture—"Sitteth," &c.—one of dignity and authority. This was the joy set before Him, and is the joy set before us? (*Ebenezer Temple.*) *The risen life* :—I. "RISEN WITH CHRIST." 1. In the earliest Christian teaching the resurrection dominates over all other Christian doctrines. It is the palmary proof of the truth of Christianity. It rested upon the evidences of the senses, and accordingly the first ministerial effort of the apostles was to publish the fact, and let it do its proper work in the understandings and consciences of men (Acts iv. 32, &c.). The resurrection is equally prominent in the teaching of St. Paul. But here the apostle teaches us its relation, not to Christian belief, but to Christian living. It is not pressed upon us as a "detached and unfruitful dogma"; it is a vitalizing principle in the living soul. Indeed all Christian doctrine in the Christian soul is inseparable from Christian practice. The practical relation between the two is observable in St. Paul's Epistles. They are not separated in the two sections into which he usually divides his letters. With him the moral element interpenetrates doctrine, and rises spontaneously out of it; while the dogmatic truth is continually reasserted as the motive or basis of the morality. In the text the resurrection is a germinant principle out of which the soul derives its new life, and by which the laws and obligations of that life are determined. This is not a mere metaphor (Eph. i. 18–20); but if it were, a metaphor surely means something: it conveys a truth under the form of an illustration. What, then, is the truth latent beneath the metaphor? 3. This resurrection with Christ is not merely a movement, a shifting of spiritual position from a lower to a higher point in the same sphere. That would be an elevation. (1) It is necessary to mark this distinction, because the one is often confounded with the other. Individuals, families, populations, are often "elevated" without being "risen with Christ." A certain mental and moral elevation is the natural result of contact with a Divine religion; may be received unconsciously; comes as if from some subtle element afloat in the atmosphere; passes unnoticed into a literary school, philosophical system, or political society; and may thenceforward be detected in half-formed ideas, and fitful currents of thought, or turns of expression. It comes to men as they gaze on the fair form of the Church, or as they mark a Christian who is seriously living for another world. (2) But what is this elevation worth? Felix underwent a certain "elevation" of conscience; Agrippa was raised above his natural level; but in each case the moral pulsation died away. The Emperor Alexander Severus underwent a certain elevation when he assigned a niche in the Imperial Pantheon to the statue of Jesus; so did Julian, who in his letters applauds the love and discipline of the Church. The same may be said of Rousseau, who enhanced the beauty of the French language in expressing his sense of the gospel, and of those modern writers of fiction who

lavish their encomiums with no sparing or graceless hand upon the religion of our Lord, and who yet apologize for the errors which His teaching condemns. But these were not risen with Christ. (3) We here touch on a distinction that is vital, and which is based upon the deeper difference which parts nature from grace. Moral elevation lies within the sphere of nature, and may be accounted for by the operation of natural causes; spiritual resurrection belongs to nature just as little as does the resurrection of a corpse. 4. Resurrection with Christ is a supernatural thing. What is meant by this? Any idea of the supernatural—(1) Presupposes belief in God as a personal agent. Clearly, therefore, it must be rejected by those philosophers which deny the primary truths of theism. (a) The Positivist must see in it a stupid phantom to be relegated to "the theological period" of human development. (b) The Pantheist will object to it as implying a distinction which, if it be admitted, must be fatal to the essential principles of his philosophy. (c) Nor does it approve itself to the sensuous materialism which is sceptical of all that lies beyond. (d) But no serious Theist can deny its possibility. He who made the world which we touch can superadd another world which we cannot touch. (2) As the term enters theology it is concerned with the relations which God has established between Himself and man in the higher sphere, such as, *e.g.*, that union with Christ, part of which is expressed in rising with Him. The lesson of our text is often not learnt; because the difficulty of learning it is spiritual rather than intellectual. To understand it we must be living the life of the supernatural resurrection. The apostle elsewhere explains what he means (Eph. ii. 3-6; i. 17-20). What wonder that all around us in the Church is supernatural, if it be a continuous exercise of the power which raised Jesus from the dead? Or that in Christian souls we behold graces of which nature is incapable. II. "SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE." 1. Seek, above all, communion with God, work for God, rest in the felt presence of God, and the final reward in God; and then all that is highest and purest in the sphere of nature. 2. What a rule for conversation. All may do something to raise or degrade it. Each may insist that in his presence it shall keep a pure tone; and a few men who are simply determined to maintain an elevated standard of social intercourse can affect for good an entire society. 3. What a rule for making friendships! How much depends for time and eternity on the choice of one whose affections shall be entwined in ours. 4. What a motto for a library, and even for sacred studies! 5. What a solemn word for those who are deciding their line of work for life, particularly if they are seeking the ministry of souls. 6. But above all, the text is a rule for the regulation and employment of secret thought. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Believers risen with Christ, and their duty in consequence*.—I. A FACT ADMITTED: the resurrection of Christ. 1. That He was dead cannot be questioned. 2. He was buried. What became of His body? 3. He rose, and in the providence of God many circumstances transpired to render it obvious and undeniable. II. THE PRIVILEGE SUPPOSED. Christians are risen with Christ. 1. Professedly, by joining the Church; coming to the Lord's table; confession with the tongue. 2. Representatively, by virtue of that federal union with Christ by which His acts become theirs. 3. Spiritually, from death in sin to a life of faith, hope, acceptance, holiness, duty. 4. By anticipation, having the pledges, earnestness, and first-fruits of exaltation with Christ. These anticipations differ in various Christians, but four seasons are peculiarly favourable to it—(1) The solitude of the closet. (2) The ordinances of God's house. (3) Affliction. (4) The dying hour. III. A DUTY ENJOINED. 1. The things themselves are described not by their nature, but by their residence, which shows their excellency. There is no night there, no pain, no sin; but the peace that passeth understanding; the joy unspeakable and full of glory; beloved connexions; the good of all ages; angels; Christ. 2. We should seek them because they are—(1) Necessary. While many things are desirable and some important, one thing is needful. (2) Attainable. You are not quite sure of earthly things. 3. They must be sought—(1) Principally. "Seek ye first," &c. (2) Intensely. (3) Perseveringly. IV. AN INFERENCE DERIVED. "If." 1. It is surely desirable to know this. 2. There is no evidence of our religious condition that can be depended upon separately from heavenly-mindedness. 3. If you are seeking the things above, they must correspond with your condition, and your practice must accord with your profession. Conclusion: 1. Some entirely disregard the things above. 2. Others regard them as doubtful. 3. Others "declare plainly that they seek a country." (*W. Jay.*) Seek those things that are above.—Contemplate—I. THE SUBLIME OBJECTS TO WHICH THE EXHORTATION RELATES. The future blessedness of believers in heaven. Notice—I. The perfection of character

they shall exhibit. There they shall partake of God's nature, and be holy as He is holy. It is impossible for sin and sinners to enter there. There is no imperfection in things above. The most eminent saints have faults and blemishes, but there they shall be free from spot or wrinkle. 2. The exercises in which they shall be engaged. Ease is sometimes regarded as necessary to enjoyment. But analogy and revelation are against the sentiment. A heaven of ease would be death rather than life. The service of heaven constitutes one part of the blessedness of the angels, and we are to be equal with them. And how multiplied must be the actions involved in a service which night never interrupts, of a mind and body that are never wearied, and of an existence which knows no end! This view may tend to moderate our surprise and sorrow at the deaths of eminent and useful Christians, who now spend their energies over wider regions. 3. The happiness of which they shall participate. All religious experience on earth affords but a faint emblem of the bliss of heaven. Here, however great, it is much marred, but there it is perfect, because all the saints are made perfectly holy. Here they taste the streams, there the fountain, and the happiness is made complete by a sight of Jesus' face. 4. The friendships they shall share. Man is constituted for society. Place him in solitude and he will pine and wither. But in heaven we shall enjoy the company of angels, of the wise and good of all ages, of our own loved ones. We look for those breaches which are made in our holy connexions to be repaired there. II. THE CONDUCT ENJOINED UPON US IN RELATION TO THEM. "Seek" them. 1. This implies belief of them. (1) Those who have just views of the Divine perfections will believe in the possibility of such a state as we have contemplated. (2) Numerous considerations indicate the probability. Every man has that within him which thinks and wills, &c., which cannot be the result of a material organization, is perfectly distinct from the body, and will not be more endangered by the dissolution of the latter than a sunbeam is crushed by the demolition of the house through which it is passing. Then again, the strong desire of immortality, common to men, is an argument in its favour. Why should God universally plant a desire He never meant to gratify? (3) But why argue its probability when I have a Bible which tells me it is certain. 2. It implies that attention is directed much towards them. They must be minded as well as credited. This is necessary because of the wrong bias the mind has received. (1) You must labour that your minds may acquire a heavenly direction, seeing that you are surrounded by the secularities of life. (2) The thoughts must go frequently forth, not now and then with long intervals between. Not that it is inconsistent with diligence in business, &c.; for that also is the service of God. 3. To set our attachment upon them. Surely it would be inconsistent in one who is going to heaven not to set his heart upon it. 4. Diligent and persevering exertions to obtain them are included. Belief awakens attention, attention kindles desires for possession, desires give birth to efforts. You are called upon, then, to use the means. Christ is our "Way" to the holy of holies, and faith, prayer, meditation, &c., are the means. III. SOME MOTIVES OR CONSIDERATIONS WHICH SHOULD IMPEL US TO THIS CONDUCT. 1. A regard to consistency. "You who were dead have been quickened, and are risen with Christ, therefore," &c. From so great a difference of state it is expected that the greatest difference of conduct should follow. 2. The reasonableness of the duty. Can there be anything more reasonable than that among the multiplicity of things which court attention, we should seek those that are most excellent and enduring. As well might a chemist hope for a universal elixir from polluted water, as mankind expect from earthly things the light and bliss of their immortal souls. Besides, earthly things are transitory as well as vain. Like the bubble that glitters in all the colours of the rainbow, but, whilst we view it, bursts, and is no more; like the splendid hues that bedeck the insects' wings fluttering in the sunbeam, but which are brushed off as soon as the beam is withdrawn, so rapidly do they flee away. 3. The present advantages resulting from the exercise here enjoined. By a wise and gracious appointment of God, duty and interest are joined together. "Godliness is profitable unto all things," &c. 4. The things above are the scene in which are displayed Christ's presence and glory. The argument of the apostle and the Saviour's prayer (John xvii.) are that we should meet Him there. In conclusion: be admonished by the consideration of the dreadful alternative which must inevitably follow the neglect of this duty. If you follow not holiness you cannot see the Lord. (*J. Beaumont, M.D.*) *Seeking things above:—*I. This is the business of the UNDERSTANDING. 1. Of late years the word "thinker" has been employed to designate those who

bring their reasoning faculties to bear on abstract problems, and who give proof of this by lectures and books, and of no others. If this use is correct, thinkers would constitute a select class indeed; it would be just as reasonable to confine the term 'worker' to a manual labourer. But all human beings think, and this is none the less true because the understanding apprehends what is before it indistinctly. The eye may none the less see because the objects are somewhat confused.

2. Thus the solemn question arises, "What do we think about?" For most of the day we have no choice. To give your mind to it is the condition of all good work. But there is a fixed hour when business ends and we regain liberty of thought. What do you habitually think about then? The question is important, for the instructive direction of thought at such times may tell us much about our real selves and our destiny.

3. Is it not true that the mind of many is occupied with much that does not guide it heavenwards? It is almost at the mercy of the first claimant; weighted with the importunity of sense; dissipated or distorted by passion; darkened by avoidance of God. What mean those long periods spent over a work of fiction which suggests at almost every page what it dares not describe; those long hours of sullen moodiness, or of hard thoughts of God?

4. It is sometimes thought that if thought is only active it must needs be good, and that only when it stagnates it breeds evil. But thought may be exercised on subjects that degrade it, and in proportion to its activity.

5. Easter then bids thought rise heavenward with Christ; it is the warrant and pattern of mental resurrection. Before Christ rose men had thought and written about another world; but at best the veil was only half withdrawn. Men hoped and guessed. But Christ made it clear and certain, and bade thought arise into the world beyond the stars, into which He passed to prepare a place for us.

6. Seek then in thought the things above. Seek the conversation of the wise, make the most of whatever enlarges and ennobles. In all higher and purer regions of thought you are nearer Christ (Phil. iv. 8). But as you seek, cry *Excelsior!* Rest not until you have struggled beyond literature, science, and nature, into the kingdom of heaven where Christ the King of Glory sits.

II. This is the business of the AFFECTIONS.

1. The affections are a particular department of desire. (1) Desire is the strongest motive power in the soul, it is what gravitation is to matter. When we know upon what desire is set, we know the direction a soul is taking. If its objects are in heaven then the soul is moving upwards, if earthly then downwards (Matt. vi. 21).

(2) Desire is the raw material which is fashioned on the one hand into covetousness, or ambition, or sensuality, or into the love of God on the other (James i. 15).

(3) Desire was meant to attach the soul to God by a spiritual attraction that should keep it, though in its freedom, true to its centre, just as the planets move ever round their central sun. And sin resembles those catastrophes which might result if it were conceivable that a planet should leave its orbit and dash wildly into space.

2. God gives to every man a certain measure of that affection which is a department of desire. It is dealt out by us partly to those whom providence has appointed to receive it—a father, mother, &c.; and also on objects which we choose to be its recipients. So we may squander it on the pleasures of sense, or compress it into high self-sacrifice. But we do not spend it twice. Since the being who loves is finite the supply is limited; and the despair of those who have given their all at the bidding of some unlawful pleasure is to find, while life is still young, but all too late, that the heart may be like a dried-up spring, "without natural affection" (Rom. i. 31; 2 Tim. iii. 3). That "wasting fever of the heart" is almost worse than the moral death of which, if unassuaged, it is the assured presentiment.

3. Seek, then, with your affections the things above. As truth is the prize of the understanding, so beauty is the prize of the heart. Let the Eternal Beauty woo and win your hearts. In that higher world there are many objects (1 Cor. ii. 9) to win them; but there is One above all others who has claims such as no other can have upon them. To love Him is to love a Being who sustains love (Rom. v. 5; Eph. vi. 24). He is the only Being in loving whom the heart can never incur the risk of exhaustion or disappointment.

III. It is the business of the WILL. There is at the centre of our being a power which rules all others, which, while professing obedience to reason, not seldom arranges its premises and settles its conclusions, and which gives play to affection or restrains it almost at discretion. It is not reason nor feeling which in the last resort rules the soul, and by which the great question of its destiny must be decided. Grant that the will is weakened, this weakness has been corrected in those who are risen with Christ (Phil. iv. 3). Away with the faint-hearted and false notion that religious effort is

an affair of temperament! Natural disposition may make things easy or difficult, but it cannot arrest the upward movement of a free, because regenerate, will. We have been made masters of ourselves by Christ, and we cannot shift the responsibility. (*Canon Liddon.*) *High ground for the affections*:—Thou puttest wheat in the low ground, and thy friend comes, who knows the nature of the corn and the land, and instructs thine unskillfulness, and says to thee, "What hast thou done? thou hast put the corn in the flat soil, in the lower land; the soil is moist; the seed will rot, and thou wilt lose thy labour." Thou answerest, "What, then, must I do?" "Remove it," he says, "into the higher ground." Dost thou, then, give ear to a friend who gives thee counsel about thy corn, and despisest thou God, who gives thee counsel about thy heart? Thou fearest to put thy corn in the low ground, and wilt thou lose thine heart in the earth? (*T. H. Leary.*) *Homewards*:—As the fire mounteth upwards to its proper place, and as the needle still trembleth till it stands at the north; so the soul, once inflamed with the heavenly fire, and acquainted with her first original, cannot be at rest until it finds itself in that comfortable way which certainly leads homewards. (*Ibid.*) *Above the tide*:—There is a plant called samphire, which grows only on cliffs near the sea. But though it grows near the salt sea waves, yet it is never found on any part of a cliff which is not above the reach of the tide. On one occasion, a party of shipwrecked sailors, flung ashore, were struggling up the face of precipitous rocks, afraid of the advancing tide overtaking them, when one of their number lighted upon a plant of samphire, growing luxuriantly. Instantly he raised a shout of joy, assuring his companions, by this token, they were now in safety. The sea might come near this spot, and perhaps cast up its spray, but would never be found reaching it. Such is the position of a soul in Christ: justified and united to Him, the person may be in full sight still of the world's threatening and angry waves, but he is perfectly safe, and he cannot be overwhelmed. (*J. L. Nye.*) *Reasons for seeking the things above*:—I. **FORM THE PROPER OBJECT OF OUR REGARD.** Every person should attend to the things which relate to his own home. But the home of a Christian is above. There is "his Father's house." II. **THEY ARE THE OBJECT FOR WHICH MAN IS BY HIS NATURE MADE;** and especially for which he is prepared in his sanctified character. 1. By the constitution of his mind, man requires an object of a spiritual and eternal kind. Nothing of a worldly nature, however multiplied, is congenial with the tendencies and desires of the immortal spirit. 2. Much more, the Christian, as renewed in his spirit by the power of God, must "seek the things above," as alone suited to his soul. Spirituality is the essence of the Christian: he breathes and tends heavenward. III. **THEIR TRANSCENDENT EXCELLENCE.** There all is perfection; all holiness and happiness. There are inconceivable glories in the heavenly world. Whatever can render it a scene worthy of the majesty of God, of the infinite merit and purchase of the Son of God, of the most enlarged desires and hopes of the redeemed; all is collected and perfect there. IV. **THEIR PERPETUITY.** The smallest good, of a lasting duration, is deemed preferable to a much greater benefit that is only transient. But the things which are not seen are eternal. V. **THE CERTAINTY OF SUCCESS ASSURED TO ALL THAT SEEK THEM IN THE RIGHT WAY.** In the pursuit of all earthly objects there is no certainty of attainment. Conclusion: What reasons, then, exist why we should seek these things with increased earnestness! 1. The apostle, who wrote the text, affords a striking example of the manner in which we should seek them (*Phil. iii. 12-14*). 2. These reasons are always growing stronger; every moment is impairing the lustre and the value of everything below; while every moment is adding to the nearness and importance of eternal things. (*Robert Hall, M.A.*) *The heavenly aspirations of the renewed nature*:—I. **THE INTIMATE CONNECTION BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE.** "Dead with Christ," "Risen with Christ." The latter phrase implies—1. That the soul was once dead in sin. The body of the sinner lives—his mind is vigorous, but his soul is dead. It sees no beauty in Christ, hears not the gospel, is unmoved by the love of God, is insensible to the terrors of the coming judgment. 2. The same power which raised Christ from the dead raises dead souls to life. II. **THE DUTY ENJOINED**—"Seek," &c. 1. The godliness is not merely a "state," but a "life." 2. In this active course the Christian is not treated as a mere machine—moved irrespective of his will. God's power is manifested in it all, but the Christian himself is to "seek." 3. We are not left in ignorance of the object of our search. "Things above." This indicates—(1) Their character. "Things above"—spiritual, heavenly, Godlike, holy, pure. (2) Their locality. Satisfaction is not to be found in earthly things.

III. THE INDUCEMENT TO THIS LIFE. "Christ sitteth" above. It is His will that those whom the Father has given Him be with Him where He is. Christ's position is—1. One of honour. "The right hand." Him hath "God greatly exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour." 2. One of power. "The right hand" is a symbol of authority. From heaven He shall come to judge the world. 3. Meanwhile it is the position of an Intercessor. (*F. Wagstaff.*) *Excelsior*:—The resurrection of Christ occupies a central place in the gospel system, and from it lines of vital connection radiate to every doctrine. As planets revolve round the central sun, and derive light and heat therefrom, so every doctrine connected with man's salvation circles round the risen Christ. 1. Apart from this no guilty man can be justified, for Christ was raised for our justification. "If Christ be not risen we are yet dead in our sins." 2. But now is Christ risen, and the opposite results follow. I. A FACT ASSUMED, viz., that Christ has risen. 1. A fact which Christ foresaw would possess transcendent interest. When the Jews asked a sign, this was the one given. 2. A fact well certified, or no fact in history is, and sceptics to be consistent must destroy their Livy, Cæsar, Gibbon, and Grote. No one of Christ's friends was predisposed to belief. The jealousy of the priesthood was a safeguard against deception. 3. A fact which alone can account for the apostle's heroic service. II. A SUPPOSITION. "If," &c. In Paul's view regeneration and progress could not be disjoined. Ascension must follow resurrection. To rise with Christ means—1. A transition from darkness to light. The grave symbolizes our state of moral darkness, conversion is the dawning of heavenly light. 2. From bondage to liberty. The grave is an emblem of captivity. When Christ rose, He led captivity captive. 3. From death to life. Christ liveth in us, and because He lives we shall live also. III. AN INSPIRING EXHORTATION. 1. Every form of life has its corresponding form of activity. "If you live," says Paul, "grow." Superior life is manifested by superior conduct. 2. Our aspiration should have a definite aim. The things above are those which purify and ennoble. (1) Knowledge, of God, Scripture, &c. (2) Faith. (3) Love. (4) Righteousness. (5) Conformity to Christ. 3. The exhortation is supported by a principle of self-consistence. You have risen, rise higher still. On what ground have we started on the heavenly race if we do not mean to continue! (*D. Davies, M.A.*) *Aspiring towards heaven*:—Ere autumn has tinted the woodlands, or the cornfields are falling to the reaper's song, or hoary hill-tops, like grey hairs on an aged head, give warning of winter's approach, I have seen the swallow's brood pruning their feathers, and putting their long wings to the proof; and, though they might return to their nests in the window-eaves, or alight again on the house-tops, they darted away in the direction of sunny lands. Thus they showed that they were birds bound for a foreign clime, and that the period of their migration from the scene of their birth was nigh at hand. Grace also has its prognostics. They are infallible as those of nature. So, when the soul, filled with longings to be gone, is often darting away to glory, and, soaring upward, rises on the wings of faith, till this great world, from her sublime elevation, looks a little thing, God's people know that they have the earnest of the Spirit. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The Christian temper*:—First, then, those who do "seek the things which are above," as a matter of fact, become elevated in tone and temper. Do not think that tone and temper are nothing. In the best pictures of great masters, tone is almost everything. Form goes for much. Form, indeed, and the steadiness of the drawing, go for very much in the "composition" of the picture; but deprive it of the wonderful *non so che* called tone, and it stands out hard and unpleasing, and supplies to the soul no real pleasure. On the other hand, let the tone of the true artist be there, and now it covers in a great degree even badness in the drawing. In the same way, in nature, atmosphere counts for much, very much, in the charm of a scene, in its power, that is, to touch the heart; and when you come to personal life, what tone is to the picture, what atmosphere is to the landscape, such is general temper to the human character. (*Knox Little.*) *Attaining higher life*:—I have known men who have been up in balloons, and they have told me that when they want to rise higher they just throw out some of the sand with which they ballast the balloon. Now, I believe one reason why so many people are earthly-minded and have so little of the spirit of heaven, is that they have got too much ballast in the shape of love for earthly joys and gains; and what you want is to throw out some of the sand, and you will rise higher. (*D. L. Moody.*) *The affections elevated*:—On board iron vessels it is a common thing to see a compass placed aloft, to be as much away from the cause of aberration as possible; a wise hint to us to elevate our affections and desires; the nearer to God, the less swayed by worldly influences. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 2. Set your affections on things above.—*Things above*:—It is implied in this exhortation that the things above are—I. KNOWN to us. We may love the unseen, not the unknown. We know them through the Scriptures. II. OURS. We may not set our hearts on what is not ours. But “all things are ours.” III. IF WE DO NOT SET OUR AFFECTIONS UPON THEM WE SHALL ON THINGS BELOW. Empty man’s heart cannot be. IV. THEY ARE THOSE AMID WHICH EVERY CHRISTIAN WILL SOON BE PLACED FOR ETERNITY. It becomes the pilgrims of time to visit by faith their future home. V. THEY ARE FITTED AND WORTHY TO OCCUPY A CHRISTIAN’S SOUL. None else are. VI. THEY HAVE A TRANSCENDENT EXCELLENCY. Note the Apocalyptic figures of them. VII. THEY ENDURE FOR EVER. All else is perishable. VIII. IN SETTING OUR AFFECTIONS ON THEM WE ARE CERTAIN OF SUCCESS. We can say this of nothing else. IX. THEY BECOME DAILY MORE AND MORE IMPORTANT, WHILE THE THINGS OF EARTH GROW DAILY LESS SO. Every day lessens the duration of temporal things and brings us nearer to eternal things. X. THEY CAST DOWN UPON US A TRANSFORMING BEAUTY. Man’s heart never acts without being acted upon. Contact with the good sanctifies; communion with the happy gladdens. Conclusion: Seek these things then—1. In the Scripture. 2. In Christ. 3. In the ministry of the gospel. 4. On the Sabbath. 5. In prayer. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Setting the affections on things above*:—I. WHAT THINGS ABOVE? Things above nature and above earth. II. WHAT THINGS ON EARTH? (1 John ii. 16; Gen. iii. 6). 1. Lust of the flesh—pleasures. 2. Lust of the eye—riches (Eccles. v. 11). 3. Pride of life—honours. III. WHAT BY AFFECTIONS? 1. The understanding and meditation. 2. The will and affections. (1) Love. (2) Desire. (3) Joy. IV. THESE AFFECTIONS ARE NOT TO BE SET ON THINGS UPON EARTH (Psa. lxxii. 10). 1. They are below us (Phil. iii. 8). 2. Unsuitable to us. 3. Unsatisfying (1 Cor. vii. 31; Job xxx. 15; Psa. lxxviii. 39; Hos. xiii. 13; Prov. xxiii. 5; Luke viii. 18). 4. Troublesome and vexatious (Matt. xiii. 22). 5. Unnecessary. (1) To the making of us happy (Job xxviii. 15). (2) To the bringing us to happiness. 6. Fleeting and unconstant (Prov. xxiii. 5; 2 Sam. xix. 43, xxi.; Belshazzar; Luke xii. 19, 20). Uses: 1. Information. (1) How sin hath debased and infatuated mankind. (2) See the folly of covetous worldlings. (3) See the easiness of charity. What a little thing God demands, and what vast returns there will be (Matt. x. 41, 42). (4) What little cause men have to be troubled for the want of such things. (5) Or others to be proud of having them. 2. Exhortation. Consider if ye do set your affections on things below—(1) Ye cross God’s end in giving them. (2) Ye provoke Him to take them away (Psa. lxxviii. 5–7). (3) Or to give you them for your portion (Psa. xvii. 14). (4) The more you affect them, the less comfort you will have in them (Psa. cvi. 15). (5) They will divert your thoughts from heaven (Psa. x. 3, 4). (6) And so disturb you in duty (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). (7) It is gross idolatry (Col. iii. 5). (8) You have better things to mind (Matt. vi. 33; Col. iii. 1). V. WE ARE TO SET OUR AFFECTIONS ON THINGS ABOVE. 1. Why? Because—(1) They are suitable for our affections (Psa. xvii. 15). (2) Our chief relations are three. (a) Our Father (Luke xii. 32; John xx. 17; Mal. i. 6). (b) Our Husband (Hos. ii. 16; Isa. liv. 5). (c) Brethren (Heb. ii. 11; Rom. viii. 29). (3) Our treasure is there. (a) Riches (Matt. vi. 19–21). (b) Honours (1 Sam. ii. 30). (c) Pleasures (Psa. xvi. 11). (d) Your affections were made on purpose for these things (Prov. xvi. 4). (e) Setting your affections on them now is the way to come to their enjoyment hereafter. 2. What? (1) Our thoughts (Phil. iv. 8). (a) Upon God (Psa. x. 4; cxxxix. 18). (b) Upon Christ (Luke xxii. 11–19). (c) Upon the Scripture that leads to them (Psa. i. 2). (2) Our love (Deut. vi. 5). (3) Desire (Psa. lxxiii. 25; Phil. i. 23). (4) Hope (Rom. v. 2). (5) Joy (Psa. iv. 6–7; 1 Pet. i. 8). 3. How? (1) In the most intense degree (Luke xiv. 26). (2) Constantly. Uses: 1. Examination. (1) What do you most think of? (2) What are you most loath to part with? (3) What do you spend most time about? (Mark iv. 19). 2. Exhortation. “Set your affections,” &c. (1) There is nothing else worthy of them (1 John ii. 15). (2) This will keep you from doating on the world (Phil. iii. 8). (3) It will keep you from grieving too much about the affairs of this life (Phil. iv. 11, 12). (4) It will make you more active in all duties (Acts xx. 24). (5) By so doing you will partly enjoy them (2 Cor. xii. 2, 3). (6) This will make you willing to die (Phil. i. 23). (7) And fit you for the enjoyment of God after death. (*Bishop Beveridge.*) *Affections rightly placed*:—I. THE AFFECTIONS ARE—1. The motions of the reasonable soul. When Jerusalem was much affected about the tidings of Christ’s birth it is said that “all Jerusalem was moved.” And when the Jews were affected against Paul they “were moved with envy.” 2. So they are the movings of the soul whereby the heart is sensibly carried

out upon what is good or evil. 3. And as it is sensibly carried out towards, so it must embrace the same. By one we follow what is good and the other shun what is evil. There are several affections, but all are ministers of love. I love a thing and, if absent, desire it; if present, delight in it. If I hate a thing I shun it or am angry with it. II. THE AFFECTIONS ARE TO BE SET ON THINGS ABOVE, AND NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH. 1. What, may we not at all affect the things of earth? Yes, ye may desire them, and grieve at the loss of them, and both desire and grief are affections. (1) But not for themselves, only in deference to Christ and in subordination to God. You are commanded to love your wives, husbands, &c., because you can love them in the Lord—but nowhere to love ourselves, money, &c., because “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him.” (2) In comparison with spiritual things your affection for them is to be as no affection. “Let him that rejoiceth be as though he rejoiced not.” “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.” 2. Why are we to set our affections on things above? Because, if they are not set on Christ and the things of Christ—(1) You will not be found marriageable unto Him. That woman is not fit to be married to a man whose affections are not knit to him. (2) You will never own Him. Ardent love is required for faithful testimony, and those who are ashamed of Christ, of them will He be ashamed. (3) Our affections will never be drawn from things beneath. Sin is mortified by the contrary good; the joy and grief of the world by spiritual joy and grief. The snow is melted by the warm beams of the sun, and the more your hearts are warmed with love to Christ, the easier will earthly affections fall away. (4) We shall never press much after the knowledge and enjoyment of heavenly things. A child if he have no affection for his book will never make a scholar. (5) We shall never be zealous for God, for zeal is the heat of Divine love. (6) We shall never do any great thing for God. The reason for David’s great gift was his affection (1 Chron. xxix. 3). (7) We shall never please God in anything we do (Rom. xii. 11). (8) We shall not be safe from apostasy. Conclusion: Do you set your affections on things above? 1. This is a hard thing to do: for it means to have a sympathy with that against which we had an antipathy; and to change our sympathies into antipathies, and *vice versa*, is no easy matter. 2. It is one thing to affect the best things and have some affections for them, and another thing to set our affections on them. Herod heard John gladly, and the stony ground received the Word with joy. 3. If men’s affections were set on things above they would not be so indifferent in the things of God as they are. For this is described as hungering and thirsting. 4. Then they would always carry these things about with them in their minds. 5. They would seek them first, of their age, day, and competition; in youth, morning, and before all. 6. They would be often speaking of them, and would love to hear others (Psa. xlv. 1). 7. They would be most indulgent and tender of them. 8. They would not be put off with any slight evidence of their interest in them. (*W. Bridge, M.A.*) *Affections the wings of the soul*:—If you will go to the banks of a little stream and watch the flies that come and bathe in it you will notice that while they plunge their bodies in the water, they keep their wings high out of it; and after swimming about a little while they fly away with their wings unwet through the sunny air. Now that is a lesson for us. Here we are immersed in the cares and business of the world; but let us keep the wings of our soul, our faith and our love, out of the world, that with these unclogged we may be ready to take our flight to heaven. (*J. Inglis.*) *Spirituality a safeguard against temptation*:—“Birds,” says Manton, “are seldom taken in their flight; the more we are upon the wing of heavenly thoughts the more we escape snares.” Oh that we would remember this, and never tarry long on the ground lest the fowler ensnare us. We need to be much taken up with Divine things, rising in thought above these temporal matters, or else the world will entangle us, and we shall be like birds held with limed twigs, or encompassed in a net. Up, then, my heart. Up from the weedy ditches and briery hedges of the world into the clear atmosphere of heaven. There, where the dews of grace are born, and the Sun of Righteousness is Lord paramount, and the blessed wind of the Spirit blows from the everlasting hills, thou wilt find rest on the wing, and sing for joy where thine enemies cannot even see thee. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The affections to be habitually heavenward*:—After painting the Sistine ceiling, Michael Angelo found that the habit of looking upward, which that long-continued work rendered necessary, made it for some time impossible to read or to look carefully at a drawing except in the same attitude. So our converse with heaven should affect our attitude in looking at the things

on earth. (T. F. B. Tinling, B.A.) *The supreme attachment due to spiritual objects*.—I. AFFECTION IS THE GOING OUT OF THE SOUL TOWARD OBJECTS WITHIN ITS VIEW. 1. How happy it were if affection might go just at its own pleasure and all be right and safe, *i.e.*, that an infallible perception accompanied it with which the moral taste strictly agreed. Then nothing would attract it that ought not; it would be in repulsion to all evil, and both in the right degrees. 2. But this is not so. (1) Our nature, composed of two kinds of being, places us in strict relation to two different economies. Therefore there is great difficulty in apportioning the regards towards these in due proportion. (2) By the output of our nature our relation to one class of interests is immediate and sensible, while the relation to things spiritual is only through thought and faith. (3) Our nature is sunk in such a state that it has a most obstinate tendency to give itself to the inferior class of interests, the effect of which is to throw away the supreme interests of the soul. (4) One would imagine the terror of this to make the doctrine of Divine grace welcome. Except in reliance on this we should hear the text with despair. II. A MEASURE OF AFFECTION FOR THINGS ON EARTH IS LEGITIMATE. Good men have used an indiscreet language almost of requiring an indifference to or contempt for earthly things; and according to this there is one essential inconsistency between our duty and the condition in which God has placed us. But our interests here have claims that must be allowed. 1. Think in how many ways we derive pleasure or pain from earthly things. Surely our Creator does not desire the pleasure denied or the pain endured more than is inevitable, or disciplinary. And, therefore, we may in measure desire the pleasing, and be anxious to avoid the painful. 2. Think how much care is necessary to avoid the ills of life, and that we may have the most benefit of its relations. Affection is inevitably and justly set on health, near relatives, and as a matter concerning him and them, on his temporal condition. And then a man that looks on the conduct of public affairs, by which his own, his family's, and his fellow-citizens' welfare are affected, will necessarily feel considerable interest in that direction. Again, if a man be of a cultivated intellect and taste, he cannot help being affected by the beauties of nature and the great works and discoveries of men. 3. But how sad it is that the relations of the present are all which many recognize. Think if they were exhorted to such an utter indifference to their temporal interests as they indulge respecting their eternal ones. What madness would be charged. *A fortiori*, then, is not theirs an awful madness. III. SUPREME AFFECTION SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR THINGS ABOVE. 1. By the nobler part of our nature we are placed in solemn relations with another economy commencing with its immortality—to God, the one infinite Being; to the Redeemer, the Lord of the new economy; to an unseen state of holy companionships and endless felicity. How marvellous that the soul can consent to stay in the dust when it might live beyond the stars. 2. What then should be the comparative state of the affections as towards the former and the latter? (1) The answer can but be that there must be, at the lowest, a decided preponderance in favour of the spiritual and the eternal. Otherwise how is the great purpose of Christ accomplished who came to redeem us to them? (2) But if no more than barely this is attained, how often it is likely to be put in doubt. We should aspire to have therefore more than a preponderance. IV. WHAT, THEN, MAY BE TAKEN AS PROOFS THAT WE HAVE THE REQUIRED PREPONDERANCE OF AFFECTION FOR THINGS ABOVE. In most cases this is a matter of prompt and unequivocal consciousness; but in this the best men find tests valuable. 1. Let a man examine when he is strongly interested in some temporal concern whether he can say more than all this is the interest I feel in things above. 2. When he is greatly pleased with something, and his thoughts suddenly turn to higher objects, is he then more pleased? 3. Or is he solicitous that this temporal good may not injure his spiritual interests? 4. If he suffers in goods or body does he feel that he would far rather suffer so than in soul, and does he feel a strong overbalancing consolation from above. 5. Is he more pleased to give earnest application to higher things than to inferior, and that he would sacrifice more for one than for the other? 6. Does he check his temporal pursuits directly they interfere with heavenly, and double his diligence in regard to the latter. 7. Do heavenly things grow increasingly attractive the nearer he gets to them? (John Foster.) *The heavenly inheritance preferred*.—I. SUPPOSE TWO SUBJECTS ADMITTED TO BE OF EQUAL VALUE PRESENTED THEMSELVES IN COMPETITION FOR OUR FAVOUR. 1. In pursuing one of them we can only gain itself, but in pursuing the other we gain it and a large share of its competitor—who could hesitate about making an election? So if a man choose the earthly he can gain

none of the heavenly; whereas if he choose the heavenly, besides securing it, he gains the best of the earthly. Nay, the choice of the heavenly portion is the more promising way of obtaining the earthly on the ground of the greater prudence and superior morality which the choice inspires, together with the blessing of God. And further, this is the only way of finding satisfaction in earthly things, and without that satisfaction they are worthless. 2. We shall be wise if we prefer that which we are sure of attaining, and resist that of which it is doubtful if we ever gain it. You who have chosen the earthly consider what a gambler's work you make of the pursuit of happiness. You must have the whole of your uncertain life in health; you must be pure amidst temptations without grace; you must have uninterrupted business prosperity; a wife who shall prove a helpmeet although chosen under dubious circumstances, and children who shall love and honour you in spite of a godless education. And happiness, according to your estimate, depends on such chances as these. But the happiness of him that seeks the things above is independent of these, and is assured not only now, but for ever. 3. Wisdom will prefer that which requires less labour. Reflect, then, what skilfulness, scheming, racing, anxiety, sleeplessness are required for gaining and retaining earthly things. Not that the life of the heavenly seeker is one of sloth, but his heavenly-mindedness enables him to go through the same work without the same disturbance, and to add others of a benevolent character by way of pastime.

II. BUT THE TWO THINGS ARE NOT OF EQUAL VALUE, and though the pursuit of the heavenly excluded the earthly, though it were uncertain while the pursuit of the earthly were certain, and though it were more laborious, yet—1. Its intrinsic value would outweigh all adverse considerations. The earthly is mainly for the body and fortune, the heavenly for both body and soul and for eternity. 2. Its necessity to our happiness is another weighty consideration. Earthly things are only at best a temporary convenience; but without the heavenly a man perishes for ever. Let, then, the most depressing view of life be taken, it is soon over, and then the Christian is for ever with the Lord. But where is the worldling after every earthly gratification then? (*W. Anderson, LL.D.*)

The vital transference:—I. THE FOLLY OF SETTING OUR AFFECTIONS ON THINGS ON THE EARTH. 1. They destroy while they please. (1) Take riches; there is no harm in preferring them to poverty; but thousands are destroyed by the pleasure of their accumulation, bodily, spiritually, and eternally. Men demean themselves, defraud, and lie for money, and think of nothing else. You have not got so far as that? But you will acknowledge that during the week if you hewed away all that was given to earthly things there would not be much left. (2) Take the approval of the world. A good name is, of course, an immense power for good: but thousands have gone down under worldly applause. Beauty, genius, everything that men and women have have been sacrificed for this, and as they went up in fame went down in character. Think of Byron, Sheridan, Burns, &c. The approval of the world while it pleases it damns. 3. They are unsatisfactory. (1) Where is the man who has been made happy by temporal success. First a man wants to make a living, then a competency, then a superfluity, then he wants more. The husks of this wilderness can never satisfy the hunger of the soul. How is it with you now with your large house of twenty rooms sumptuously furnished; are you any happier than when you had only two? If you have never found out the true secret of life—the love of God and His service, you are not so happy. Besides, if they had all that they profess, we cannot keep them. How many dollars is Cræsus worth now? (2) We cannot depend on friendships. Some play us false; the truest leave us. (3) We cannot build on domestic enjoyments, pure and holy though they be.

II. TRANSFER, THEN, YOUR AFFECTIONS TO THINGS ABOVE. 1. We ought to do so. We have a throne there, a multitude to greet us, and Jesus. 2. If we did so it would change everything in us, and make us more gentle, loving, hopeful, and when we come to die we should need no Jacob's ladder or angel's wing. 3. The apostle had such an idea of heaven that it made the troubles of life seem insignificant. "This light affliction." (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*)

*Drawings toward heaven:—*A man was passing along the street, and saw a blind boy seated on his father's knee, holding in his hand a kite-string, the kite flying away in the air. The man said, "Is it any satisfaction to you, my lad, to fly that kite, when you cannot see it?" "O yes, sir," he replied, "I cannot see it, but I can feel it pull." And so out of this dark world, and amid this blindness of sin, we feel something drawing us heavenwards; and though we cannot see the thrones, and the joy, and the coronation, blessed be God, we can feel them pull. (*Ibid.*)

*The antidote to asceticism and sensualism:—*You must not

only seek heaven; you must also think heaven. (Cf. Phil. iii. 19, 20.) Extremes meet. Here the apostle points the antithesis between earthly and heavenly things to controvert a Gnostic asceticism: in the Philippian letter he uses the same contrast to denounce an Epicurean sensualism. Both alike are guilty of the same fundamental error; both alike concentrate their thoughts on material, mundane things. (*Bishop Lightfoot.*) *The death of Melancthon*:—"Is there anything else you want?" was asked Melancthon on his deathbed. "Nothing but heaven," was the reply. *Not on things on the earth*:—"In return for his splendid services to China, Gordon would accept only the distinctions of the "Yellow Jacket" and the "Peacock's Feather," which correspond to our own orders of the Garter and the Bath. Of these rewards he wrote to his mother: "I do not care twopence about these things, but know that you and my father like them." The Chinese Government twice offered him a fortune. On the first occasion ten thousand taels were actually brought into his room, but he drove out the bearers of the treasure, and would not even look at it. On the second occasion the sum was still larger, but this also he declined, and afterwards he wrote home:—"I do not want anything, either money or honours, from either the Chinese Government or our own. As for the honours, I do not value them at all. I know that I am doing a great deal of good, and, liking my profession, do not mind going on with my work. Do not think I am ill-tempered, but I do not care one jot about my promotion, or what people may say. I know I shall leave China as poor as I entered it, but with the knowledge that through my weak instrumentality upwards of eighty to one hundred thousand lives have been spared." (*E. Hake.*) *The heart misplaced*:—"To set the heart on the creature is to set a diamond in lead, or to lock coals in a cabinet and throw jewels into a cellar. (*Bishop Reynolds.*) *Vanity of earthly things*:—"Æsop's fable says:—"A pigeon oppressed by excessive thirst, saw a goblet of water painted on a sign-board. Not supposing it to be only a picture, she flew towards it with a loud whirr, and unwittingly dashed against the sign-board, and jarred herself terribly. Having broken her wings by the blow, she fell to the ground, and was killed by one of the bystanders." The mockeries of the world are many, and those who are deluded by them not only miss the joys they looked for, but in their eager pursuit of vanity bring ruin upon their souls. We call the dove silly to be deceived by a picture, however cleverly painted, but what epithet shall we apply to those who are duped by the transparently false allurements of the world! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Attractions of the world*:—"Nearly all can recall that favourite fiction of their childhood, the voyage of Sinbad the sailor into the Indian Sea. They will remember that magnetic rock that rose from the surface of the placid waters. Silently Sinbad's vessel was attracted towards it; silently the bolts were drawn out of the ship's side, one by one, through the subtle attraction of that magnetic rock. And when the fated vessel drew so near that every bolt and clamp was unloosed, the whole structure of bulwark, mast, and spars tumbled into ruin on the sea, and the sleeping sailors awoke to their drowning agonies. So stands the magnetic rock of worldliness athwart the Christian's path. Its attraction is subtle, silent, slow, but fearfully powerful on every soul that floats within its range. Under its enchanting spell bolt after bolt of good resolution, clamp after clamp of Christian obligation, are stealthily drawn out. What matters it how long or how fair has been the man's profession of religion, or how flauntingly the flag of his orthodox floats from the masthead? Let sudden temptation smite the unbolted professor, and in an hour he is a wreck. He cannot hold together in a tempest of trial, he cannot go out on any cruise of Christian service, because he is no longer held together by a Divine principle within. It has been drawn out of him by that mighty loadstone of attraction, a sinful, godless, self-pampering, Christ-rejecting world. (*Cuyler.*) *Earthly and heavenly things*:—"As it is but foolish childishness that makes children so delight in baubles that they would not leave them for all your lands, so it is but foolish worldliness, and fleshliness, and wickedness, that makes you so much delight in your houses, and lands, and meat, and drink, and ease, and honour, as that you would not part with them for heavenly delights. But what will you do for pleasure when these are gone? Do you not think of that? When your pleasures end in horror, and go out like a taper, the pleasures of the saints are then at their best. (*R. Baxter.*) *Earthly-mindedness*:—"It is storied of Henry the Fourth of France, asking the Duke of Alva if he had observed the eclipses happening in that year, he answered, that he had so much business on earth, that he had no leisure to look up to heaven. A sad thing it is for men to be so bent, and their hearts so set on the things of this world, as

not to cast up a look to the things that are in heaven; nay, not to regard though God brings heaven down to them in His Word and sacraments. Yet so it is: most men are of this Spanish general's mind; witness the oxen, the farms, the pleasures, the profits and preferments, that men are so fast glued unto, that they have hardly leisure to entertain a thought of any goodness. (*J. Spence.*) *Love of the world*:—A dervish once went into a confectioner's shop. The confectioner, to honour him, poured some honey into a dish before him. Immediately a swarm of flies settled, as was their wont, upon the honey; some upon the edge of the dish, but the greater number in the middle. The confectioner then took up a whisk to drive them off, when those upon the side flew away with ease, but the others were prevented from rising, the honey clinging to their wings, and were involved in ruin. The dervish noticed this, and remarked, "That honey-dish is like the world, and the honey like its pleasures. Those who enjoy them with moderation and contentment, when the whisk of death approaches, not having their hearts filled with the love of them, can with ease escape its snare; while all who, like the foolish flies, have given themselves wholly to their sweetness will meet with destruction." (*From the Hindustani.*)

Vers. 3, 4. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.—*The Christian's life*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S DEATH. "Ye are dead." Is not this a paradox? Did not Christ come that we might have life abundantly. And yet when we enter His service we are told to die. Who can solve the enigma? Scripture only. 1. "She that liveth in pleasure," &c. (1 Tim. v. 6)—dead to spiritual things. In that heart there beats no pulse for God; in that spirit there is no desire of heaven; pleasures of sense engross it. Just the reverse of this will explain the text. Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is an enemy to God. Impiety has entered into an unholy compact to amalgamate the two; but it is a covenant with death, and shall be disannulled. The Christian regards the world as though it were not, although the difference may not be apparent to a superficial observer. Try him. Let his duty be set before him, and however difficult he will not shrink it. Mark him in sorrow sustained by an energy of which the world wotteth not. He is risen with Christ. 2. The Christian is crucified with Christ, and is so dead to sin. As by the Saviour's dying, the power of death was destroyed, so by the sinner's dying it is dethroned, and he becomes a new creature in Christ. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE. It is hid with Christ in God. 1. In the sense of secrecy. (1) Revelation has not been minute in new discoveries of the better world. Just enough is known to increase faith and confirm hope. This is necessary to the idea of probation, for perfect knowledge would leave no room for faith. Hence we only know in part. Our senses can give no information, for it is out of their province; it baffles reason; imagination may plume her tireless pinions, and revel in the ideal magnificence she can call into being, but still it hath not entered into the heart of man. None of those who have travelled the road have returned. (2) This is a secrecy of mercy. The eye of the mind, like the eye of the body, is injured by excess of light; and the office of faith would be prematurely gone. 2. In the sense of security. We are continually reminded of the instability of all around us. Fair buds of promise are blighted by the wintry blast. Friends twine themselves round our affections, and then die. The world is rapidly decaying. But the life to come abideth. Time affects not them who live for ever. Death is destroyed for them, and so they are safe. Where is it hidden? With Christ. Where He is—in that land where "there shall in nowise enter anything that can hurt or destroy." "In God," in His great heart—who is never faithless to His promise, and whose perfections are pledged to confer it. How can we be distrustful? III. THE CHRISTIAN'S PROSPECTS (ver. 4). These words imply—1. Enjoyment. Scanty as is our knowledge of the future, enough is revealed to exalt our highest hopes. It is brought before us as an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled; as a paradise amongst whose trees of life there lurks no serpent; a country every fresh revelation of whose beauties shall augment our knowledge and joy; a city whose every gate is of jewellery, whose every street is a suntrack; as a temple, and above all as our Father's house where our elder Brother dwells. Yet these are but emblems. 2. Manifestation. The irreligious world perceives a difference between it and the children of God which it cannot understand. It thinks not that that man whom it charges with hypocrisy or fanaticism is among the favoured ones of heaven, and that beneath a beggar's robes there throbs a prince's soul. Bide your time. With what different feelings will they be regarded

when they appear with Him in the glory of the Father and with the holy angels.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY (ver. 2). If all this be the case, how can we resist the conclusion? For a Christian to be absorbed in the gainfulness of the world is at once an infatuation and a sin. It is as though a prince were to revel with beggars. What have you, of the blood royal of heaven, to do with this vain fleeting show? Call faith to your aid—"the evidence of things not seen." (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*)

The present condition and future glory of life in Christ:—Observe—

I. THAT THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE IN CHRIST INVOLVES A NEW RELATION TO OUTWARD THINGS. "For ye are dead." There was a time when he lived in, to, and for the world. But now, while still in it, he is dead to its charms and to its ordinances. All the mainsprings of activity are changed. Man lives where he loves.

II. THAT THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE IN CHRIST IS ONE OF CONCEALMENT FROM THE OUTWARD WORLD.

1. It is hid. All life is hid. Its origin is a profound mystery. The botanist fails to discover it. The scalpel of the anatomist has not pierced its dark domain. Its presence is known only by its effects. It is not a life of vulgar display.
2. It is hid with Christ. Christ Himself was hidden when here, and is now to the world, and the believer's life is with Him as a river concealed in a hidden channel flowing beneath. This hiding indicates (1) dependence. It is not hid with the believer himself; he derives it from Christ, and on Him depends for its nourishment. The springs of this life abide when every other source is exhausted. (2) Security. Our life is safer in His keeping than it could be in our own. Man was once entrusted with it, and he lost it.
3. It is hid in the depths of the Godhead. Not lost in the abyss of Deity, as the mystic or pantheist would teach; but so hid as to retain its own conscious individuality, while sharing in the boundless life of God.

III. THAT THE BELIEVER'S LIFE IN CHRIST WILL, IN THE FUTURE, BE MANIFESTED IN INEFFABLE GLORY.

1. There will be a signal manifestation of Christ in the future.
2. The believer will share in the ineffable glory of that manifestation. This implies (1) public recognition. The believer, obscure and despised on earth, is acknowledged before the universe as related to Christ. All the ends of secrecy are answered. The hidden is revealed. (2) A personal participation in the splendour of Christ's triumph and in the bliss of His character. (*G. Barlow.*)

The Christian life is—I. A DEATH. "Ye are dead."

 1. You have retained an individuality, but lost a consciousness. You had a knowledge once of which you have no knowledge now. Your old sins are like names on a tombstone; once they were your whole being and personality.
 2. "Dead," for how can life be sustained without food? and the old life is unalimented. You have ceased to fulfil the lusts and thus to maintain the being.
 3. "Dead," for you are a mystery to the world. They think there are no pure men and women, but there are, and they have been crucified with Christ.

II. A DIVINE GIFT LOST AND RESTORED. Life was the most precious jewel in the gift of God. God inbreathed this life—gave it to man to keep it. Man threw it away. Then said Christ, "I will recover it, and crown him again." "I am come that they might have life." But it could only be recovered at the expense of His own. He conquered, and a second time "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." And from that moment He said to His people, "I am the Keeper of your life." That jewel must not be thrown away again.

III. HIDDEN. All life is. The life of a tree, of an insect, eludes the physiologist. It is an awful mystery. We have, too, to feel in our friendships that the heart that beat very near to us, even after all its confidences, is hidden. Our spiritual life is hidden.

 1. In its origin. It is a Divine seed. It is the breath of the holy. When men attempt to reason on this matter their processes are sometimes startling and their conclusions un instructive. It is "hidden from the wise and prudent," &c. It is hidden, but Divinely true.
 2. In its development. "The world knoweth us not because it knew Him not." True, we may be known by our deeds, but we are hidden, like a pearl in the sea, a star in the daytime. But God sees what we see not. He watches the growth, tends and trains His loved ones. But the growth of a Christian often contradicts the expectations of the world. When the world says, Behold their weakness, Christ says, Behold their strength, and *vice versâ*. Your hopes, fears, prayers, &c., the world never saw. All the most sacred things are secret.
 3. In its destiny. As all waters run into the sea, so all fulness in us terminates in our fulness in Him.

IV. SAFE. We feel this for our lost friends; let us feel it for ourselves and our living dear ones. The treasure we could not keep is guarded among the regalia of the skies. The forces of eternity bind us to our Lord as the earth is held in order by her parent sun. Good people are neither born, nor live,

nor die by chance. So of little children. Why are they born to die? it seems so vain, the parents solicitude and agony. No, it is not vain. "Their life is hid with Christ in God." A citizen may be safe, although the walls may be destroyed; the man, although the dress be destroyed; the root, although the flower may be destroyed; the soul, although the body be destroyed. Diseases and fiends may prow around, and fires consume, but they cannot touch him whose life is hid, &c.

V. TO BE MANIFESTED IN GLORY. 1. Glory! What is that? The revelation of the hidden life. Think of it less as the triumph of the conqueror than as the ecstasy of the new-born delight in the thrice holy state. 2. With Him. In the deeper recesses of the heavenly state, when glory does not cast too dreadful a brilliancy; there meditating on the wonder that we appear with Him, that we have seen Him smile, that He has introduced us to our dear ones, that He will employ us in holy toil. 3. Meanwhile, in the presence of this thought, let all light afflictions be forgotten. (*Paxton Hood.*) *The hidden life*:—I. ITS REALITY. A traveller in Brazil on passing a mountain, was informed that there was a priceless treasure in the heart of it, which, when disenchanting, would appear. What was a fiction here is a truth concerning the interest of the Christian in Christ, the Rock of Ages. Our title to salvation is in Him; but He is hidden. None the less sure, however, is it that we are saved if we believe in Him. Two considerations may assure us. 1. The consciousness of spiritual change. We have changed views and feelings in regard to God and His claims. We have peace where once was disturbance. We have the Spirit of Adoption, who bears witness with our spirit (Rom. viii. 16). 2. The evidence of spiritual character: walking in the light, fruitfulness, Christly dispositions, Christian service. The life of the Christian is a testimony to the power of Divine grace. Without Christ we can do nothing; but our character and actions show that we have Him. II. ITS PRECIOUSNESS. Great store is set on it as men set upon the treasures which they used to bury. Statesmen, philanthropists, &c., are presented with the freedom of a city, and the pledge of honour is enclosed in a golden casket. Our citizenship is in heaven with Christ. What dignities are consequently conferred upon us? We are sons, heirs, kings, priests. The service and death of Christ made this privilege possible, and with it "all things are ours," and to keep it we willingly count "all things loss." III. ITS SURE GUARDIANSHIP. There is nothing valuable but is exposed to danger. Full well we know the peril of the spiritual life, and if it were in our own custody we should soon lose it. But who can erase the shining characters from the life-roll of heaven, traced by the finger of God? Satan's dark hand cannot reach the archives of heaven. A phosphoric flame can be kept alight in water by electric influence communicated through a wire; so the life of God can be maintained within us, notwithstanding all that tends to extinguish it, through the influence derived from Christ. The late Duke of Brunswick had an iron jewel chest which was so skilfully contrived that when any one opened it, who knew not the secret, bells rung, and pistols were fired. But skilful thieves one night dug through the wall against which it was placed, pierced the chest, and stole many of the gems. And, however careful we might be, if there were not One greater and more vigilant than ourselves our life treasure would be lost. IV. ITS RESERVE. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." The glory that shall be revealed is not yet manifest. Hence the world knoweth us not, and therefore treats us with contempt. The world values rank, wealth, parade, &c. But some day there will be a full recognition. Look upon a landscape in winter, how dark the trees, dull the grass, cold and uninteresting the scene. But look again when spring and summer have breathed their influences abroad; what luxurious foliage, flower-enamelled turf, singing birds. The hidden life is come forth and is acknowledged. Once, when Lord Macaulay was surrounded by courtly friends in a brilliant assemblage he recognized and shook hands with a retiring literary man whose genius he knew, but whom others passed by. Christ at last shall confess His own before His Father and the angels. But till then this life and glory are hid in Christ. Yet be encouraged; your redemption draweth nigh. V. ITS DEATHLESSNESS. The perishable body shall decay, but the life secured by Christ shall not be harmed. He will bring it forth and crown it. A cloud passes over the nightly sky; but you wait, and a breeze chases the mist away, and then all the splendour of the starry firmament bursts on your gaze. So death is but a passing eclipse. "Then shall the righteous shine," &c. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear." Conclusion: 1. Prize this life. 2. Seek the proof of its possession. 3. Thank God for it. 4. In patience possess your souls. (*G. Mc Michael, B.A.*) *Death and life in Christ*:—I. WHERE OUR LIFE IS NOT. It is not in ourselves.

"Ye are dead." 1. How completely the image of bodily death in the senseless, motionless, and unimpressive state of the mortal frame, compared with its vigour and activity during life, represents the natural condition of the soul before God. Talk to the dead of the most stirring truths, surround them with all that charms the living, lavish upon them all the endearments that the heart can bestow, and what return will you receive? Just so is it with the soul in its unconverted state. How else is it that men hear these verities of God and go on as though there were no soul, God, eternity? It is because the soul is dead, cannot see, hear, feel. 2. But this absence of life is ascribed to the converted likewise. They are not dead so as to denote the actual want of life, for Christ is their life; but dead because they have not this life in themselves. The soul has no power to quicken and regenerate itself. Shall the dead raise the dead! Who has not striven to rouse the stagnant affections, kindle the cold desire, to walk closer with God, and render a more zealous obedience, yet found his efforts profitless as trees thrice dead. It is well for us to know the depth of our own need, and the feebleness of our best strength. It is from ignorance that we make these efforts in our own strength, and fail till the heart grows sick. Yes, and grace does not on this side heaven remove this state of impotency. At no stage does God give the soul life in itself; He imparts and renews it, as the soul has need, all fresh from Himself in daily streams to meet daily wants. He does not in one act of conversion store the soul with a treasure of strength, but breathes into it more and more of His spirit, keeping the soul dependent on Himself as a child on its parent. II. WHERE OUR LIFE IS. "Hid with Christ in God." 1. But why not have given man life directly in Himself? This is what God really did; but man lost it beneath his first temptation. Then was moved the fount of Divine compassion, and through a scheme of redemption, culminating in Christ's resurrection, life is procured for man again. 2. Then comes the question, Into whose keeping shall this life be put? Doubtless life will be in man himself hereafter; but that will be in heaven, when the adversary, all bound and fettered, shall have been cast into his own place. But in whom shall it be placed meanwhile? (1) In man, who had already once lost it? Entrusted to fallen man to keep that which unfallen man could not keep? Our experience may well teach us how dark had been our lot, if the preservation of our spiritual life amid this world of sin had been left merely to our own strength. (2) Should it, then, have been entrusted to some mighty archangel? Ah! then we had seen war, when angel was mated against angel, and we, all fearful, had seen our all at stake upon a dubious contest. (3) No! that gift which, once lost, had been recovered at so vast a cost, had it been a second time lost could never have been a second time recovered—for God had no second Son to give. That life was not to be lightly imperilled, and therefore God laid it up in His own Son, that He who had purchased should preserve what He had purchased, and against whose infinite strength all hell is weak to snatch one soul that trusts in Him. "He is able to keep that which is committed unto Him," &c. (*E. Garbett, M.A.*) I. THE CHRISTIAN'S DEATH AND LIFE. 1. Two periods in the history of a Christian: death, resurrection (*Comp. Eph. ii. 1, and 1 Pet. i. 3*). 2. Why these expressions—death, life? Three kinds of life—bodily; of the heart; religious. The last alone real, according to the gospel. It consists in setting our affections on things above, and is in God with Christ. Christ having borne our life away we are dead. "Set not your affections on things on the earth." (1) The earth is not our place. (2) The Christian, although dead, is not useless nor desolate in spirit, for He has God. (3) Nevertheless he is dead—(a) To sin. (b) To the world. (c) He has fixed his goal beyond all that is transitory; he is a stranger, a traveller, a passer-by. He is dead, and appears dead. How natural this is. Nothing troubles, or excites, or astounds him; gives the right cheek, &c.; this man it is said has no blood in his veins. 3. Yet he lives, but his life is hidden. In one sense it is not so. But—(1) Its principle is hidden. (2) Its best parts are invisible—prayer, &c. (3) The Christian conceals himself. When all the world speaks well of you, tremble. II. MOTIVES FOR TAKING UP ONE'S POSITION. 1. Christ has not yet appeared. Christ is known and unknown. "Shall the disciple be more than his Master?" 2. The Christian is seen of God, this must be enough. There are flowers on inaccessible heights seen only by Him. Mediæval sculptors carved exquisite images on the top of pillars to be "seen of God." 3. Glorious compensations—king in disguise. 4. Promise of being manifested some day. "He that shall confess Me" (*Dan. xii. 3*). III. APPLICATION. All this is Christianity, neither more nor less. You might be asked, Are you risen? Are you dead? I ask—1. Do you love invisible things? Angels

love them. 2. Do you love the hidden life? To be last, &c. 3. Do you feel that this is your safety as well as your natural position? Or do you perform all your actions with a view of being seen of men. (*A. Vinet, D.D.*) *The hidden life:—*

1. What gives Christ's mediatorship its practical dignity is not only its display of Divine mercy but also its fitness to invigorate and encourage a spiritual life in the believer; and the most reverential view of God manifest in the flesh is the largest producer of daily holiness, as well as the dearest to the heart. 2. The first fact that we encounter in the historic consciousness of the Church is Christ's invisible supremacy as its head and Lord in the private hearts of disciples and in their public organization and activity. No sooner was Jesus gone than, with the widest diversities of tastes and habits, they were united in one common bond of a hidden life. Journey where they will their hearts cling to one invisible Master. 3. And so it has been in the line of spiritual descent every since. Personal fellowship with Christ has been the hereditary blood in the veins of the Church. This inward life we have now to interpret. I. IN ITS NECESSITY. The need of sharing the Mediator's life lies within the soul itself. 1. From the consciousness of spiritual deficiency. (1) We all feel that we are not what we ought to be, but terribly otherwise. (2) Now if we lived under an abstract law this sense of deficiency would remain an inoperative discontent at having fallen short only of an ideal standard, so that we should be but offenders against our own ambition, not sinners. (3) On the contrary, we are under the government of a personal God. Our goings astray are not mistakes, but sins; not merely dwarfings of our manhood's stature, but affronts against a heavenly Father. His law is good, but our lives are not. Suppose the past score settled by repentance, who of us but knows that he will sin again. (4) What, then, were our life without a Mediator reconciling it? What, except it were animated by His power, and forgiven by His pardon? 2. From the native notion of perfection. (1) The trace of glory past, and pledge of immortality to be lingers with us. The soul will not be content with its degradation. Nicodemus dreams of a character saintlier than a Pharisee, and feels his way to Christ. (2) Here again, if there were no personal God to whom these aspirations reach up, if they did not culminate in the supreme desire for harmony with the holy Father, then we should need no Mediator, and these notions would be only transient visitants. But the moment our eyes are opened on our true relations to God we see that there is no such thing as a satisfactory striving after ideal standards, but only after reconciliation with Him, that the restless heart gets peace at the moment of the conviction that God is its friend. Perfection of character is not to be gained except by that inspiration; a peaceful progress in goodness comes only by that faith. (3) And now again, the only way to the Father is by the Son. For in Christ every ideal of excellence is realized. We no longer aim at the cloudy excellence of imagination. Christ is before us. Those that place their hands in His He leads to the Father. To be Christlike is to be perfect; to have faith in Christ is to be brought near to God. II. ITS NATURE. In what special kinds of force do its power and peace and charm consist. 1. In this, that being received into our faith in just these two characters in which we need Him, (1) Christ creates within the disciples the freedom that comes from the consciousness of being forgiven. That is the beginning of all healthful obedience. What was a dismal compulsion before becomes a spontaneous and freewill offering now. With life all is new; its spring is gratitude, not law; its principle love, not fear; its end, the Divine glory and man's good, not a selfish salvation. But this life is thankfully and joyously hid with Christ. Expunge the Cross, and in what other gospel will you look for the glad tidings of forgiveness. (2) Christ directs the disciple's practical energies to a model that is Divine. Christ is the pattern for the energies that form character. But the example of Jesus loses its grandest inspiration when He is made to stand apart from His followers. It is not a statue outside us, but a vital force working within. To have our life hid with Him we must have Him formed in us. And the pattern is not the Christ of Cæsar's time, but the ever living Immanuel. Paul had that fellowship so palpably that he said, "I live, yet not I," &c. 2. The life hid with Christ in God is a life constantly invigorated by Christ's quickening spirit received by faith. 4. The doctrine of spiritual union through Christ with God affects devotion. He who is conscious of it knows it by the richer interest given to his prayers. For it reveals Christ as our "advocate with the Father." How can He intercede for us but by a present acquaintance with our needs? Praying in His name is something more than repeating a proposition at the end of our petitions. It must be praying from the feeling that He knows the substance of our prayer and

the heart it confesses, and that He aids it by His prevailing sympathies now as much as when He taught His disciples to say, "Our Father." 4. Even in those relations which lie most directly between our souls and the Father, which might therefore seem to be most independent of a Mediator, the highest style of piety is not seen without a lively sense of Christ. That faith, *e.g.*, that every concern in our lives is contrived for us by a sympathizing God, a faith which embosoms us in a care so fatherly that we want some warmer word than Providence to express it, is not found except in hearts alive with personal love for Christ. III. ITS RESULTS.

1. It is the life of love. Being hid with Christ it is penetrated with the spirit of Him who loved as never man loved. Being hid in God it is suffused by the affections of Him whose name is Love. No man hating his brother can abide in this fellowship, no despiser of the poor, no bigot, no oppressor, no conceited Pharisee. Jesus is charity, and to live in Him is to live mercifully, fraternally, and liberally. When the world's life is hid with Him, the bloodshed of nations, the overreachings of commerce, the unequal administrations of governments, the barbarous contrasts in Christian cities, the hatreds of households, will yield to a constructive principle of heavenly order. "I in them," &c.—the social life of the disciples hid with Christ in God. 2. This life solves the old contradiction between works and faith. Christian character is not a mosaic of moralities, but a growth. All we have to do is to receive Christ, and then the fruits of daily righteousness will naturally spring forth, in all forms of manly uprightness, womanly serenity, conscientious citizenship, beneficent industry. 3. The doctrine gives the world truth in all its uncompromising rigour and concrete applications. If Jesus be admitted in all the purity of His transparent soul as a visible witness of the conventional veracity that is satisfied if it equivocates by lying labels, or evasions in a bargain, and artifices in law courts, of the silly falsehoods of flattery, or cowardly falsehoods to avoid offence, who would dare to confront with them the look of His Divine rebuke? Christ, then, hid in the heart, is the test and guardian of truth.

4. And of justice no less; not that formal honesty, which is only a moral name for a selfish policy, not the legal integrity which has no higher sanction than the letter of the statute book, and so cheats the helpless or steals a competitor's reputation, but rather that spiritual justice which treats every man uprightly because a child of God, although only a servant or an office boy. 5. The hiding of our life with Christ corrects the error that religion is a product of humanity. A few conquests over matter have flattered us into the conceit that God must look down with vast complacency on our attainments, and so we come to substitute decorum for piety, and fancy that we make ourselves acceptable with God. A reception of Christ would expel this self-reference and measurement. The inner life in Christ is offered because otherwise the soul is weak and dark. (*Bishop Huntington.*) *The hidden life*:—Standing by the telegraph wires we may often hear the mystic wailing and sighing of the winds among them, like the strains of an Æolian harp; but one knows nothing of the message which is flashing along them. Joyous may be the inner language of those wires, swift as the lightning, far-reaching and full of meaning, but a stranger meddles not therewith. Fit emblem of a believer's inner life; men hear our notes of outward sorrow wrung from us by external circumstances, but the message of celestial peace, the Divine communings with a better land, the swift heart-throbs of heaven-born desire, they cannot perceive: the carnal see but the outer manhood, but the life hidden with Christ in God flesh and blood cannot discern. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The hidden life of the Christian*:—I. THE TREASURE.

Natural life is a treasure. How highly we value it. When sick what measures we take for recovery. But what is that compared with the life of the soul? The life referred to is—1. A life of justification (Rom. viii. 32). 2. A life of sanctification (Eph. ii. 10). 3. An eternal life of glory. II. ITS CONCEALMENT. 1. It is hid from the world, not in its characteristics and effects, but in its nature and spiritual operations. Communion with God, justification, assurance, Christian peace and joy, are all inscrutable to the natural man, because only spiritually discerned (1 Cor. i. 11). 2. It is partly hidden from Christians themselves. Not that a man can be a Christian without knowing it; but there are ever fresh and astonishing phases opening up, *e.g.*, in the apprehension of the meaning of Scripture, and in the heights and depths of Christian experience (1 John iii. 2). And the greatest mystery is that we are Christians at all. 3. It is hidden for safety. Because so precious it is placed out of Satan's reach. III. ITS CARETAKER—"with Christ." This may mean—1. Mystical union with Him (Eph. v. 25). 2. Federal union. We are represented by Christ in all that He has done and is, and the Father regards us

as in Him. Nothing, then, can injure us, since Christ has borne all the injuries which the law could inflict. We cannot be arrested for our debt since Christ has paid it; nor condemned for our crime since Christ has borne our curse (Rom. viii. 1).

3. Vital union (John xv. 1-5). The continuance of our life is provided for, and its abiding fruitfulness. IV. ITS HIDING-PLACE. "In God," God accepts the charge, and with Christ elevates us to—1. Divine dignity. We are of heaven while on earth; in God while before men. 2. Divine rest. Who can doubt or sorrow who has a revelation and experience of the character of God? (T. B. Baker, M.A.) *Life hid in Christ*.—I. WHAT OF THE DEATH WHICH PRECEDES THIS LIFE? 1. It is a conscious death. There is no spiritual chloroform in the dispensary of the Great Physician. Man is wide awake during the whole process of conviction and conversion. No drug is wanted to stupify, but like the Saviour's death consciousness must not be disturbed or destroyed. 2. It is a willing death. The will, like a brave helmsman, conducts the soul out of the troubled waters of sin, and shapes and steers the course for the peaceful haven. Here is another parallel. What gave value to the death of Christ was its willingness. 3. It is an honourable death. Was it becoming at every Waterloo banquet to drink a toast in solemn silence in honour of the brave who fell? Men hang out the tattered colours in our national sanctuaries as honourable trophies. We turn to a nobler warfare with grander issues. When the black flag of rebellion is hauled down, the spirit of hostility is changed into devotion, reverence, fellowship, and service. When a man ceases to do evil and learns to do well, when he dies to sin and lives to God, we may call his death an honourable one. 4. It is a useful death. Who shall calculate the usefulness of death. Who shall reckon for us the value of the death of Sir John Franklin in the land of ice; of Allan Gardiner in the land of fire; of Abraham Lincoln, &c.? So here; the tomb in which these dead are buried is changed into the "womb of the morning," and they become "children of the light and of the day." II. WHAT OF THE LIFE WHICH FOLLOWS THIS DEATH? 1. It is a life of safety (Psa. xxvii. 5). "Hid with Christ;" what a companion! Hid "in God"; how impregnable. What slender bulwarks man erects. "I hid myself," is the sorrowful expression of impotency, and is not a wiser policy than that of the ostrich who buries her head in the sand when escape has become impossible. 2. It is a life of privilege. That holy margin of the Saviour's time between His resurrection and ascension helps us to understand our privileges. How He comforts, confirms, and feeds. What recognition and communion. Outsiders could not see it. "Their eyes were holden." 3. It is a life of mystery. "It doth not yet appear," &c. We know in part only. (H. T. Miller.) *The Christian's life hid with Christ*.—I. WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF TWO WORLDS, A SEEN AND AN UNSEEN, as we ourselves are two selves, seen and unseen; the unseen showing itself in our countenance, and impressing some portion of our character upon it, still, for the most part, unseen except by God. And even our very soul is of a twofold character, belonging in part to the world of sense, in part to the unseen world; and belonging most to either according as the corrupt nature or the new life gains the mastery. And each of these worlds is real, in that each acts upon our soul and moulds it for heaven or hell. But to us that only is real which we realize. Our soul hangs between the two, and as it is drawn down or up, it loses sight of that from which it is withdrawn. 1. To fleshly persons this world is their all; they have no senses for the unseen which they love not. They lose the power to think of God. The truths relating to God become fainter and fainter, and in some dreadful cases God is thought of "as such an one as himself." The natural mind can think of God only as one with the world. Among the heathen this is seen most nakedly (Rom. i. 28; 21-23). "The pure in heart shall see God;" the impure, then, cannot see Him. "In His light we shall see light;" they, then, who have it not in them must be blind (1 Cor. ii. 14). 2. In like way as men become spiritual, they, too, lose their power of discernment of the things of the flesh. They cannot understand the world, nor the world them. Having learned desire to be last, they cannot understand man's ambition to be first; nor covetousness, having learned that poverty with Christ is the true riches; nor pride, knowing the blessedness of humility. The sounds, maxims, and pursuits of the world are unreal to the Christian. All seems hollow: its merriment a heaviness; its eagerness a chasing of the wind; its show a painted mask; its laughter madness; its pleasures revolting (1 Cor. ii. 16; Luke xvii. 15). II. SINCE, THEN, THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE IS HID, HE MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE WORLD'S MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND OPPOSITION. 1. This naturally follows (1 John iii. 1; John i. 10), and Christians should take it cheerfully. It is an eternal law that we under-

stand those only to whom we are like. We have no power of judging except by the principles and standards we have made our own. We cannot see what is beyond our range of vision. So the world judging by its own standards cannot understand the Christian. It could not act on his principles, and so thinks him a dissembler or mad (Mark iii. 21; Acts xxvi. 24). The world must misjudge us, however careful we are to avoid offence; and God would teach us hereby to commit ourselves to His judgment (Psa. xxxvii. 5, 6). 2. The world misjudges because it knows nothing of the inner experiences of the Christian life. They who live amid the tumult of the outward cannot hear the secret whispers of His love by which God speaks to souls that seek Him. They cannot tell the secret thrill of joy in the hope that we are indeed God's, and shall be His for ever. They cannot tell the sweetness when the soul feels itself beloved. III. SINCE OUR LIFE IS HID, WE MUST BEWARE HOW WE PREJUDGE ANYTHING THAT GOD SEES NECESSARY FOR THAT LIFE. We understand only so much as we, by acting, know. So we must not be prejudiced against what comes to us in the form of untried self-discipline and self-denial. One of the most frequent hindrances to a more excellent way is that men, instead of trying it, ask of what good it is. At every stage knowledge is the reward of obedience. IV. SINCE OUR LIFE IS HID WE MUST NOT BE DOWNCAST IF WE HAVE NOT THE REFRESHMENT WE WOULD HAVE, NOR SEE AT ONCE THE END OF OUR ACTIONS AND OURSELVES (1 John iii. 2). We are hidden from ourselves. We know not what we are. We see ourselves surrounded by death, and amidst this death have earnestness of life (Rom. viii. 23); but since our love is imperfect, so is our life and our sense of life. Its source is our Lord hidden, streaming thence to us through the Comforter, discovering itself in holy aspirations, strength, victories; but since it is hidden we must not long for it as though revealed. Had we the fulness of that life it were heaven itself. Now we have at one time the brightness of His presence that we may be cheered onward; now it is veiled that we may be humbled. V. IT WILL EVER BE THAT OF THIS HIDDEN LIFE, THE VERY HIGHEST DEGREES WILL BE WHAT WE LEAST UNDERSTAND. For it is of God. And since, being finite, we cannot grasp the infinite, our nearest approaches to Him will ever be what we can least grasp or analyze. When caught up into the third heaven what Paul heard were words unspeakable; his inward sense heard what words could not embody; and so in our degree, our highest bliss is what we can least represent or define, or reason upon; yet we know it to be real. VI. AS THIS HIDDEN LIFE IS OBTAINED, SO IT IS TO BE MAINTAINED AND PERFECTED BY DEADNESS TO THE WORLD. Death to the world is life to God; the life in God deadens to the world. The less we live for things outward the stronger burns our inward life. The more we live amid the distractions of the world, the less vivid is the life of the soul. It matters not wherein we are employed or how. We may in the most sacred things forget God, or in the most common things serve Him. We may be promoting His truth, and ourselves be the unfruitful conduit through which it flows; or we may in the meanest things be living to His glory, and thereby promoting it. Self-denying duty, love, and contemplation together advance this life; but not either alone. Conclusion: 1. It is our office to see how, day by day, we may be more hidden from the world, that we may be more with God. 2. As this life is God's great gift, and our present duty is to cherish it, so it is our stay and support to know that it is hid, &c. (Isa. xxvi. 3; Psa. xxvii. 5; xxxi. 29). A evil reacheth Him not, nor losses affect Him, nor dispraise hurt Him, so not the Christian. And if [so now, how much more hereafter (Rom. viii. 35-39).] (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *The hidden life—with Christ in God:*—It is hidden—I. IN ITS ORIGIN. Conversion is a hidden operation. We have read many accounts of it. We are told how certain words, thoughts, providences, were followed by certain feelings, resolutions, actions, but the change itself is beyond the cognizance of the person changed. "The wind bloweth," &c. II. IN ITS GREATEST MOMENTS. 1. That of self-dedication. When a man takes the oath of allegiance to his country, it is in the presence of others; but when he swears fealty to God, he is hidden with God. 2. That of communion with God. The soul wants something more than is supplied by public worship. 3. Those of its highest joys, as when Jesus was transfigured, He was hid from His disciples by the bright overshadowing cloud. 4. Those of its deepest sorrows, as Jesus was separated from His disciples in Gethsemane. The greatest actions have not appeared on the public stage of history: they are obscure, unchronicled, unmonumented, but God has seen and estimated them. III. FROM THE EYE OF THE WORLD. The life of the world consists in being alive unto sin and dead unto God. The Christian has withdrawn from and is dead to this. Hence though his life be manifest as the sun, the world cannot see him. "If our gospel be hid,"

&c. Nature may be hidden in two ways; at midnight by darkness, at noonday by blindness. When Christ appeared the world knew Him not; so with His disciples. It requires a Christian to understand a Christian. The world has not the key to the Christian life. IV. WITH CHRIST. 1. As our representative. The union between the believer and his Lord is a hidden one. It is the sheet anchor of spiritual life cast within the veil, and therefore hidden; but it is in the strength of that the soul can ride securely through the tempest of time. 2. As the object of our affections. Our true home is the spot towards which the heart tremblingly turns as the needle to the pole. "Where your treasure is," &c. 3. The full meaning of our present life is hidden with Christ. It is full of mystery. Think of its suffering; its relation with sin; its mortality, &c. 4. The final glory of this life is hid with Christ. "It doth not yet appear," &c. V. IN GOD. God Himself is the hidden one. "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." "Canst thou by searching," &c. What safety, comfort, joy, the Christian has. (*F. Ferguson.*) *The life hid with Christ in God*:—Have we not heard of rivers rolling in their calm and apparent majesty, hidden from the eye by the deep woods, by the solemn mountains, and the wide-extending prairie? Hidden! nay, has it not been our lot to listen to the murmurings of far-off mountain streams we could not see? The Christian's life is such; like one of those glorious streams born and taking its rise in far-off mountains, then descending the awful sides of the rugged hill, and shooting into light; then winding and wending its way through villages and fields, by cities and by towns; more or less quiet, more or less observed; then betaking itself to far-off country places again; telling, as it rolls, no story of its birth, and little of its means of widening growth; now watering the giant oak, and the graceful beech, and the lovely elm; and apparently lost in creeping its way by sedgy nettle-beds, and banks covered with the hemlock and the weed; but not less useful in the one place than the other, till at last, beyond sight, it is lost in the distant sea. So, for all purposes of illustration, it is with the Christian life and the life of God, as revealed in the human soul. (*Paxton Hood.*) *The need of an inner life*:—On a winter's night I have noticed a row of cottages, with a deep load of snow on their several roofs: but as the day wore on, large fragments began to tumble from the eaves of this one and that other, till, by and by, there was a simultaneous avalanche, and the whole heap slid over in powdery ruin on the pavement, and before the sun went down you saw each roof as clear and dry as on a summer's eve. But here and there you would observe one with its snow-mantle unbroken, and a ruff of stiff icicles around it. What made the difference? The difference was to be found within. Some of these huts were empty, or the lonely inhabitant covered over a scanty fire; whilst the peopled hearth and the high-blazing faggots of the rest created such an inward warmth that grim winter melted and relaxed his grip, and the loosened mass folded off and tumbled over on the trampled street. It is possible by some outside process to push the main volume of snow from the frosty roof, or chip off the icicles one by one. But they will form again, and it needs an inward heat to create a total thaw. And so, by sundry processes, you may clear off from a man's conduct the dead weight of conspicuous sins; but it needs a hidden heat, a vital warmth within, to produce such a separation between the soul and its besetting iniquities, that the whole wintry incubus, the entire body of sin, will come spontaneously away. The vital warmth is the love of God abundantly shed abroad—the kindly glow which the Comforter diffuses in the soul which He makes His home. His genial inhabitation thaws that soul and its favourite sins asunder, and makes the indolence and self-indulgence and indevotion fall off from their old resting-place on that dissolving heart. The easiest form of self-mortification is a fervent spirit. (*James Hamilton, D.D.*) *The lost taste*:—A traveller who was asked whether he did not admire the structure of some stately building made reply, "No; for I have been at Rome, where better are to be seen every day." *The power of a new affection*:—Dr. Chalmers, riding on a stage-coach by the side of the driver, said, "John, why do you hit that off leader such a crack with your lash?" "Away yonder there's a white stone; that off leader is afraid of that stone; so, by the crack of my whip and the pain in his legs, I want to get his idea off from it." Dr. Chalmers went home, elaborated the idea, and wrote, "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection." You must drive off the devil and kill the world by putting a new idea in the mind. (*Dr. Fish.*)

Ver. 4. When Christ who is our life shall appear then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.—*Christ our life*:—What is meant by life? The word is very compre-

hensive, and includes—1. Appropriate activity. 2. Happiness. The life here intended is (1) not natural life; (2) not intellectual life; (3) but spiritual and eternal life. Christ is our life in that He is—I, ITS AUTHOR. 1. He saves us from death. (1) By His atonement which satisfies the law. (2) By delivering us from the power of Satan. 2. He is the author of inward spiritual life. Because—(1) He procures for us the gift of the life-giving Spirit. He has redeemed us in order that He might receive the promise of the Spirit. (2) He not only merits, but imparts the gift of the Holy Spirit. II. ITS OBJECT. 1. The exercises in which Christian life consists terminate on Him. 2. The happiness involved consists in fellowship with Him. He is our life as He is our joy, portion, inheritance. III. ITS END. It is Christ for us to live. While others live for themselves—some for their country, some for mankind—the believer lives for Christ. It is the great design of his life to promote Christ's glory and advance His kingdom. Inferences: 1. Test of character. The difference between the true and nominal Christian lies here. The one seeks and regards Christ as His life only as He delivers from death; the other as the end and object of life. 2. The true way to grow in grace, or to get life, is to come to Christ. 3. The happiness and duty of thus making Christ our life. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Christ our life*:—1. Life is seen around us striking out in tender beauty in the tiny flower which opens its delicate bosom to the light of the sun, or developing into majesty and grandeur in the giants of the forest—this is vegetable life. 2. Life is seen breaking out in the songs of birds, and displayed in the movements of the lower creatures and in the manifold activities of men—this is animal life. 3. Life is seen in the speculations of the philosopher, the research of the historian, the musings of the poet, and the contrivances of the architect and mechanician—this is intellectual life. 4. Life is seen in that hatred to sin, those yearnings after holiness, those graces of faith, hope, &c., the anticipation for heaven which characterize the true Christian—this is spiritual life. To Christ all these may be traced, but Paul is here speaking of the last. I. CHRIST ON THE CROSS IS THE SOURCE OF OUR LIFE. Spiritual life is no new principle; it was bestowed by Christ as the Almighty Creator. But here we have to view Christ not as the Lord of life, but the victim of death. What an amazing contrast. Yet by the latter He brought life and immortality to light. From this His life flows out to those dead in sin. II. CHRIST IN THE HEART IS THE ESSENCE OF OUR LIFE. He not only procures, but is our life. "I am the life." When we receive life we receive Him. The faith which saves embraces not an abstraction, a truth, but a Person. Many are satisfied with knowing about Christ—the Christian has vital union with Him. III. CHRIST IN HIS ORDINANCES IS THE SUPPORT OF OUR LIFE. All life requires sustenance. A flower that receives no rain or sunshine withers. God has appointed means for the nourishment of our life. 1. Secret prayer. What is this? An interview with a Person, not the mere utterance of desire breathed into the vacant air; growing intimacy with Christ; the soaring of the soul into the atmosphere of love and joy which makes the pulse of life beat more firmly. "The Christian's vital breath," &c. 2. The Sabbath, and its opportunities for sustained intercourse with Christ in sanctuary services (*Psa. lxxiii.* 2). The want of profit in these arises from not seeking God in them. Those who find Him receive augmentation of life. 3. The Lord's Supper, in which Christ brings Himself specially near, and to realize Him in it is to receive out of His fulness grace for grace. IV. CHRIST ON EARTH IS THE PATTERN OF OUR LIFE. All life has some outward manifestation. Every grace embodies itself in act. "Work of faith," &c. God has given us a rule in His Word after which we should conform ourselves. But He has taught us also by example. In Christ's lowly condition He has taught us not to be ashamed of our poverty. As a workman He ennobled trade. The sorrowful may be comforted by thinking of the Man of sorrows. What an example we have in Him of self-sacrifice, love, forgiveness, courage, &c. The closer we study His life the more we shall be assimilated to it as Moses was to the glory of God (2 Cor. iii. 18). V. CHRIST IN HEAVEN IS THE CONSUMMATION OF OUR LIFE. Here we have but grace, glory lies beyond. His presence in glory is a pledge that we shall share it. The bonds of union will be drawn closer. "For ever with the Lord," &c. Conclusion: There is no true life but in Christ. Let us beware lest Christ's lamentation, "Ye will not come unto Me," &c., be over us. (*W. Steele, M.A.*) *Christ our life*:—"What think ye of Christ?" The proper answer is the text. It is not said merely that He lives in us, or that we live by Him or through Him, but that He is our life. Let us apply this—I. TO THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATIVE LIFE: justification. 1. We are all dead in law. The soul destitute of the favour of God is dead.

There remains only the execution of the sentence to complete our misery. 2. In this state Christ finds us and undertakes to be our life. One of the first questions of an awakened soul is, "How shall a man be just with God?" The gospel replies, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." There was such merit in His cross that God, though just, becomes a Saviour. It is not by the works of the law or repentance, but by the atonement laid hold of by faith that we legally live. But this only justifies us instrumentally; Christ through it meritoriously. Whatever view the Scriptures take of it—release from curse, deliverance from wrath, remission of penalty, acceptance with God—Christ is always the author. II. TO THE CHRISTIAN'S ACTUAL LIFE: sanctification. 1. Our death in sin is not only a death in law, but a proper alienation from the life of God. Before we can be restored to communion with God a life of purity must be imparted. Of this Christ is the cause, His Spirit the agent, His word the instrument, His example the model. The outcome of all which is that as He was so are we in the world. 2. But Christ is our life not only as it respects the way in which we are made holy, but as it respects holiness in detail. He is (1) the life of all Christian graces. (a) Faith which gives life to good works, holy tempers, joyful affections; but faith is looking to an object; that object is Christ. It is receiving a gift; that gift is Christ. (b) Hope. Our anchor is cast within the veil, and is sure and steadfast; but if Christ had not entered first our attempts to cast it had been in vain. (c) Love. Christ is its object, purifier, director. (2) The life of all Christian duties. They are inspired by Him and directed to His glory. (3) The life of Christian ordinances. These will be wells without water if He be absent—sacraments, prayers, thanksgiving, preaching. III. THE CHRISTIAN'S FUTURE LIFE. 1. Of resurrection. (1) As His power is the agent to effect it. (2) Because His raised body will be its model. (3) Inasmuch as His appearance the second time will be its signal. 2. Of glory. (1) It is His to assign to each saint his proper place and occupation in heaven. (2) His presence mainly constitutes the bliss of heaven. (3) The degrees of heavenly glory will be regulated by the degrees of our nearness and intimacy to Christ. Conclusion: 1. The subject addresses itself most powerfully to the hearers of the gospel. Preachers labour in vain, hearers listen in vain, if there be no communication of life. 2. To earnest seekers of salvation the subject affords much encouragement. You want pardon, purity, strength, hope. Secure Christ for your life and you will have all. 3. Let Christians learn to be grateful, consistent, useful. (*Jabez Bunting, D.D.*) *Christ our life*:—No thoughtful man can be satisfied with a mere worldly life—continued existence, a round of selfish pursuits, and sensual delights which deaden the finest instincts. I. THE VITAL PRINCIPLE THAT IS RECOGNIZED. The relation between Christ and His people is vital. Christ is not merely the source and support of their life, but is it. There can be no life—physical, mental, or spiritual—apart from the action of the Divine mind. A sculptor may carve a most life-like figure, but he cannot impart the vital principle. 1. This life is spiritual in its nature. The Christian is surrounded by material things, and resides in a material body; but his spiritual life is distinct. Christ creates and controls it. It is the life of faith, hope, love. 2. It is eternal in its duration. It does not prevent physical dissolution, but survives it. Christ has given us the fullest assurance of our immortality? It is part of the Divine life; therefore age cannot enfeeble its powers, disease cannot impair its beauty, and death cannot terminate its existence. 3. What is your life? Are you living to gratify the lowest or highest instincts of your nature? If the former your life is not worth living. II. THE SPECTACLE THAT IS PREDICATED. 1. The manner of Christ's appearing "in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." It is a splendid sight to witness a military review, to see the glittering swords, serried ranks, waving banners, to hear the clattering drums, martial strains, triumphant shout. But no earthly scene is worth comparing with the grandeur and solemnity of the second coming of Christ. Millions were ignorant of His first advent; all shall see His second. 2. Its purpose. (1) To be glorified. Once He appeared in weakness and humiliation; then in power and majesty. (2) To glorify us. 3. Its time. Unknown, and to attempt to settle it is to trifle with God's Word. When it comes it will be sudden and unexpected. III. THE GLORIOUS HOPE THAT IS AWAKENED. From the cradle to the grave our life is inspired by hope. The Christian hope is—1. That one day we shall be with Christ. There are earthly companionships for which the heart sighs. Our affections cling to those we love. The believer clings to Christ who is the object of all his hope and desire. 2. That one day we shall participate in Christ's glory. What that glory is no mind can

conceive. Can the seed understand the sweetness and beauty of the flower? the stone the form and grace of the statue? Here God's children are often poor and unknown. By and by Christ will recognize, honour, crown them. The poet's fame is brief, the soldier's glory uncertain, the king's crown perishable, but the Christian's triumph certain and eternal. (*J. T. Woodhouse.*) *Christ our life:*—Yet to appear. **I. CHRIST IS OUR LIFE.** 1. This is John's way of talking. "In Him was life," &c. (1) Christ is the source of our life. "As the Father raiseth up the dead," &c. Jesus is our Alpha as well as Omega. We should have been dead in sin if it had not been said, "You hath He quickened." He gives us the living water, which is in us a well springing up into everlasting life. (2) Its substance. There is much mystery in the new nature, but none as to what is its life. Penetrate the believer's heart and you will find Christ's love throbbing there; penetrate his brain and you will find Christ to be its central thought. (3) Its sustenance. He is the living bread which came down from heaven. (4) Its solace. His loving-kindness is better than life. (5) Its object. As speeds the ship towards the port, the arrow to its goal, so flies the Christian towards the perfecting of His fellowship with Christ. As the soldier fights for his captain and is crowned in his captain's victory, so the Christian. "To me to live is Christ." (6) Its exemplar. The Christian has the portrait of Christ before him as the artist has the Greek sculptures. If he wants to study life, he studies from Christ. Husbands and wives truly knit together grow somewhat like each other in expression, if not in feature, and the heart in near fellowship with Jesus must grow like Him. Grace is the light, our loving heart the sensitive plate, Jesus the object who fills the lens of the soul, and soon a heavenly photograph of His character is produced—similarity of spirit, temper, motive, action. 2. What is true concerning our spiritual life now is equally true of our spiritual life in heaven. 3. This life of Christ marks our dignity. Kings cannot claim it as such. Talk of their blue blood and pedigree, here is something more. 4. This accounts for Christian holiness. How can a man remain in sin if Christ is his life? 5. See how secure the Christian is. Unless Christ dies he cannot die. **II. CHRIST IS HIDDEN, SO, THEREFORE, IS OUR LIFE.** 1. To the unspiritual Christ is as though He did not exist. The worldling can neither see, taste, nor handle Him. Yet unseen as He is He is in heaven, full of joy, pleading before the throne, reigning, and having fellowship with His saints everywhere. 2. The servant is as his Lord, and is treated accordingly. **III. CHRIST WILL ONE DAY APPEAR AND WE WITH HIM.** 1. How? (1) In person. (2) With great splendour. 2. When? No one knows, and it is impertinent to inquire. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ our life and our hope:*—There are two things in daily life which exert a great influence over men—fear and hope. A man will work hard through fear that want may come or through hope of bettering his condition. God appeals to both to awaken conscience and stir up the heart to diligence. "Flee from the wrath to come." "Lay hold on eternal life." "Mortify," &c. (vers. 5, 6, and text). **I. CHRIST OUR LIFE.** Many are Christ's glorious titles, but none more precious than this. Christ is our life inasmuch as He negatively delivers from death. But He does much more. In a positive sense He is our life. 1. In bringing spiritual and eternal life to the soul dead in sin. There is no life without light. When God said, "Let there be light," life soon came. So "in Him was light, and the light was the life of men." We cannot believe Christ till we know Him; when we know Him we believe, and by faith comes life. "This is life eternal," &c. 2. In being the indwelling life of the soul. An infidel once said to a negro, "How can God dwell in man and man in God?" "How can fire be in iron and iron in fire? When the bar is in the furnace," was the reply. "In Christ." "Christ in you." 3. Through the soul's going out to Him for spiritual life and blessing. Plants stretch towards the light. If they are closed in a dark house, and there be a chink through which the light shines, they will stretch in that direction. Where there is spiritual life it will move towards Christ in faith and love. 4. In being the strength of our life. Herein lies alone our power for good against evil. It is no easy thing to live the Christian life; and forms afford little help against temptation and for duty. The old man must be thrown off and the new man put on, and Christ only is sufficient for that. And just as we are strong in Christ shall we be able to discharge the duties here laid down. **II. CHRIST OUR HOPE.** 1. The present position of the Christian is good: his prospect is equally good. Hence not only Christ crucified, but Christ coming was the subject of apostolic teaching. Christ's first coming was the desire of all nations; His second the grand hope of the Church. 2. His redeemed people will appear with Him. (1) They will for ever emerge from

their obscurity. (2) They will be made glorious. The ambition of many is to shine in positions of honour; but surpassing every earthly distinction will be that of appearing with Christ. "If we suffer we shall also reign with Him," and "be like Him." A dying soldier said to his friend, "I am going to the front." The front is a position of danger and honour. This good soldier of Christ was going to the front to meet the last enemy, and also to receive the crown of victory. (T. West, B.A.)

Christ the life and hope of believers:—Paul in the previous verse tells believers that their life is hid. "When shall it be discovered?" they might object. He here tells them. I. CHRIST IS OUR LIFE. 1. As its author (John xiv. 6). 2. As its matter (John vi. 48). 3. As its exerciser and actor (John xv. 5). 4. As its strengthener and cherisher (Psa. cxxxviii. 3). 5. As its completer and finisher (Heb. xii. 2; Phil. i. 6). This being the case let us—(1) Not repent of anything done, suffered, or lost for Him. "All that a man hath will he give for his life." (2) Highly prize the Lord Jesus. He is worthy, and consider how highly He prizes you; and a Christ highly prized will be gloriously obeyed. II. BELIEVERS SHALL AT LAST APPEAR GLORIOUS (Judges xv. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 43-44, 51-55; 1 Thess. iv. 13; Matt. xix. 26-28). The reasons are because—1. The day of their appearing will be the marriage day of the lamb. Mourning weeds will be put off, and glorious robes put on. 2. They shall appear as kings crowned; here they are kings elected with the crown in reversion (2 Tim. iv. 7-8). 3. Their enemies and persecutors will see them in their true character as God's favoured ones. 4. Their manifestation will make much for the honour of Christ. The more glorious the body or the bride, the more glorious the head or bridegroom. 5. The wicked will then justify the goodness and mercy of God in His dealings with His people. Objections will then be answered (Job xxi. 15; Mal. iii. 14). 6. They shall be employed in glorious work (1 Cor. vi. 2-3). (T. Brooks.)

Christ the life and hope of the Church:—I. CHRIST IS OUR LIFE. Our life is bound up with His. He is Source, Medium, Giver. This destroys every hope of obtaining salvation without Him. Then let the sinner trust Him alone; and let this truth fill the Christian with joy. II. CHRIST IS NOW HID. 1. He was so to the Old Testament Church, before His first coming; He is so to the New Testament Church before His second coming. There is nothing that speaks to our eyes or ears. But this is true also of God Himself. 2. But as the invisible things of God are manifested in creation, so the invisible things of Christ are made patent by the influence of His preached truth upon the mind and heart. We live "by faith not by sight." 3. This does not interfere with His purposes of mercy. Both God and Christ can bless without discovery to the senses, and if this fact becomes a snare and an affliction to those who trust Him, it is because they seek Him by sense not by faith. 4. By this arrangement the gospel appeals to the higher elements of our nature, to those faculties which identify us with the angels; and thus it tends to lift us above the seen and temporal. It compels us to think, and should call forth gratitude. III. CHRIST SHALL ONE DAY APPEAR. 1. This subject is shrouded in mystery, and every speculation as to the time, &c., has been falsified; which should warn us off, and turn us to practical preparation for His coming. 2. There is a sense in which Christ appears—(1) in proportion as His cause triumphs; (2) to nations, that knew Him not, when they receive His gospel; (3) to believers at conversion and every stage of the spiritual life; (4) to dying saints; (5) to His people in the disembodied state. But these are all different from and inferior to the manifestation at the last day. 3. His second coming is looked forward to not only by the Church on earth. Patriarchs, &c., who never saw Him on earth await it; so do glorified saints who have not forgotten the promises they learned here. 4. The purposes for which He shall appear are important in relation to—(1) His adversaries, who shall be completely subdued. (2) His friends, who have been aspersed and persecuted, and shall then be honoured and rewarded. (3) Himself; for His honour will then be vindicated in the presence of the Jew, unbeliever, and denier of His Godhead. (4) God, whose justice and mercy have been denied. IV. HIS PEOPLE SHALL APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY. 1. As Christ is hid so are His people. The angels know them (Luke xv. ; Heb. i.) but not the world, and sometimes not one another; and many are hid in heaven. 2. When He appears so will they. (1) In countless multitudes; think of the millions of infants who have been saved the conflict, and the millions of believers who have triumphed over it. (2) In distinct individuality, as "every eye shall see Him," so they. (3) As identified with Christ. "Thine they were, and Thou hast given them Me." (4) In glory—free from sin and sorrow; publicly acquitted; possessed of the kingdom; body and soul happy for ever, and both like

Christ. Let us hasten forward to meet this glory. (*Joseph Davies.*) *The Christian's winter and summer* :—In winter the green tree is like the dry. Summer comes, and the living root produces leaves and fruits. So our winter is the concealment of Christ, our summer His manifestation (ver. 3). Yes, dead full surely. But dead in appearance, alive at the roots. And think of the summer burst which is to follow—when Christ, who is our life, shall appear. Lo, my covenant, dear God! I will die to myself that Thou mayest live in me. (*Augustine.*) *Anticipations of glory* :—Do you ever feel like those lions in the Zoological Gardens, restlessly walking up and down before the bars of their cage, and seeming to feel that they were never meant to be confined? Sometimes they are for thrusting their heads through the bars, and then for dashing back and tearing the back of their dungeon, or for rending up the pavement beneath them, as if they yearned for liberty. Does your soul ever want to get free from her cage? Here is an iron bar of sin, of doubt, and there is another iron bar of mistrust and infirmity. You may have seen an eagle with a chain upon its foot, standing on a rock—poor unhappy thing! it flaps its wings—looks up to the sun—wants to fly right straight ahead at it and stare the sun out of countenance—looks to the blue sky, and seems as if it could sniff the blue beyond the dusky clouds, and wants to be away; and so it tries its wings and dreams of mounting—but that chain, that cruel chain, remorselessly holds it down. Has not it often been so with you? You feel, “I am not meant to be what I am; I have a something in me which is adapted for something better and higher, and I want to mount and soar, but that chain—that dragging chain of the body of sin and death will keep me down.” Now it is to such as you that this text comes, and says to you, “Yes, your present state is not your soul's true condition, you have a hidden life in you; that life of yours pants to get out of the bonds and fetters which control it, and it shall be delivered soon, for Christ is coming, and the same appearance that belongs to Him belongs to you. And then your day of true happiness, and joy, and peace, and everything that you are panting for, and longing for, shall certainly come too.” I wonder whether the little oak inside the acorn—for there is a whole oak there, and there are all the roots, and all the boughs, and everything inside that acorn—I wonder whether that little oak inside the acorn ever has any premonition of the summer weather that will float over it a hundred years hence, and of the mists that will hang in autumn on its sere leaves, and of the hundreds of acorns which itself will cast, every autumn, upon the earth, when it shall become in the forest a great tree. You and I are like that acorn; inside of each of us are the germs of great things. There is the tree that we are to be—I mean there is the spiritual thing we are to be, both in body and soul even now within us, and sometimes here below, in happy moments, we get some inklings of what we are to be; and then how we want to burst the shell, to get out of the acorn and to be the oak! Ay, but stop. Christ has not come, Christian, and you cannot get out of that till the time shall come for Jesus to appear, and then shall you appear with Him in glory. You will very soon perceive in your rainwater certain ugly little things which swim and twist about in it, always trying if they can to reach the surface and breathe through one end of their bodies. What makes these little things so lively, these innumerable little things like very small tadpoles, why are they so lively? Possibly they have an idea of what they are going to be. The day will come when all of a sudden there will come out of the case of the creature that you have had swimming about in your water, a long-legged thing with two bright gauze-like wings, which will mount into the air, and on a summer's evening will dance in the sunlight. It is a gnat you have swimming there in one of its earliest stages. You are just like that; you are an undeveloped being; you have not your wings yet, and yet sometimes in your activity for Christ, when the strong desires of something better are upon you, you leap in foretaste of the bliss to come. I do not know what I am to be, but I feel that there is a heart within me too big for these ribs to hold, I have an immortal spark which cannot have been intended to burn on this poor earth, and then to go out; it must have been meant to burn on heaven's altar. Wait a bit, and when Christ comes you will know what you are. We are in the chrysalis state now, and those who are the liveliest worms among us grow more and more uneasy in that chrysalis state. Some are so frozen up in it that they forget the hereafter, and appear content to remain a chrysalis for ever. But others of us feel we would sooner not be than be what we now are for ever, we feel as if we must burst our bonds, and when that time of bursting shall come, when the chrysalis shall get its painted wings and mount to the land of flowers.

then shall we be satisfied. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory." (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Vers. 5-9. Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth.—*Slaying self*:—Mortify, therefore, because ye were raised with Christ. The homeliest moral teaching of the Epistle is based upon its "mystical" theology. Character is the outcome and test of doctrine. But too many people deal with their beliefs as they do with their hassocks and hymn-books in their pews, so it is necessary to put the practical issues very plainly. I. THE PARADOX OF SELF-SLAYING AS THE ALL-EMBRACING DUTY OF A CHRISTIAN. "Mortify" conveys less than is meant. "Slay your members" is the spiritual duty which stands over against the error of "severity to the body" against which the Colossians had been warned (chap. ii. 23). It consists in the destruction of the passions and desires. 1. Paul's anthropology regards men as wrong and having to get right. A great deal of moral teaching talks as if men were rather inclined to be good, and its lofty sentiments go over people's heads. The serpent has twined itself round my limbs, and unless you give me a knife to cut its loathsome coils it is cruel to bid me walk. Culture is not the beginning of good husbandry. You must first stub up the thorns and sift out the poisonous weeds or you will have wild grapes. 2. The root of all such slaying is being dead with Christ to the world. What asceticism cannot do in that it is weak through the flesh, union with Christ will do; it will subdue sin in the flesh. 3. There must, however, be vigorous determination. "Slaying" cannot be pleasant and easy. It is easier to cut off the hand which is not me than to sacrifice passions and desires which are myself. The paths of religion are ways of pleasantness, but they are steep, and climbing is not easy. The way to heaven is not by "the primrose path." That leads to "the everlasting bonfire." Men obtain forgiveness and eternal life as a gift by faith; but they achieve holiness, which is the permeating of their characters with that eternal life, by patient believing effort. II. A GRIM CATALOGUE OF THE CONDEMNED TO DEATH. Paul stands like a jailer at the prison door, with the fatal roll in his hand, and reads out the names of the evildoers for whom the tumbril waits to carry them to the guillotine. It is an ugly list, but we need plain speaking, for these evils are rampant now. 1. Fornication covers the whole ground of immoral sexual relations. 2. All uncleanness embraces every manifestation in word, look, or deed of the impure spirit. 3. Passion and evil desire are sources of evil deeds, and include all forms of hungry appetite for "the things that are upon the earth." 4. Covetousness, whose connection with sensuality is significant. The worldly nature flies for solace either to the pleasures of appetite or acquisition. How many respectable middle-aged gentlemen are now mainly devoted to making money whose youth was foul with sensual indulgence. Covetousness is "promoted vice, lust superannuated." And it is idolatry, a fetish worship, which is the religion of thousands who masquerade as Christians. III. THE EXHORTATION IS ENFORCED BY A SOLEMN NOTE OF WARNING (ver. 6). 1. The thought of wrath is unwelcome because thought inconsistent with God's love. But wrath is love wounded, thrown back upon itself, and compelled to assume the form of aversion, and to do its "strange work" of punishment. God would not be holy if it were all the same to Him whether a man was good or bad; and the modern revulsion against "wrath" is usually accompanied with weakened conceptions of God's holiness. Instead of exalting, it degrades His love to free it from the admixture of wrath, which is like alloy with gold, giving firmness to what were else too soft for use. Such a God is not love but impotent good nature. 2. The wrath "cometh." That may express the continuous present incidence of wrath or the present of prophetic certainty. That wrath comes now in plain and bitter consequences, and the present may be taken as the herald of a still more solemn manifestation of the Divine displeasure. The first fiery drops that fell on Lot's path as he fled were not more surely precursors of an overwhelming rain, nor bade him flee for his life more urgently, than the present punishment of sin proclaims its own future punishment, and exhorts us to flee to Jesus from the wrath to come. IV. A FURTHER MOTIVE IS THE REMEMBRANCE OF A SINFUL PAST. 1. "Walking." That in which men walk is the atmosphere encompassing them; or to walk in anything is to have the active life occupied by it. The Colossians had trodden the evil path and inhaled the poisonous atmosphere. "Lived" means more than "Your natural life was passed among them." In that sense they still lived there. But whereas they were now living in Christ, the phrase describes the condition which is the opposite of the present—"When we

roots of your life, tastes, affections, &c., were immersed, as in some feculent bog, in these and kindred evils." 2. This retrospect is meant to awaken penitence and to kindle thankfulness, and by both emotions to stimulate the resolute casting aside of that evil in which they once, like others, wallowed. The gulf between the present and the past of a regenerate man is too wide and deep to be bridged by flimsy compromises. It is impossible to walk firmly if one foot be down in the gutter and the other up on the curb-stone. V. WE HAVE AS CONCLUSION A STILL WIDER EXHORTATION TO AN ENTIRE STRIPPING OFF OF THE SINS OF THE OLD STATE (vers. 8, 9). 1. The Colossians, as well as other heathen, had been walking and living in muddy ways; but now their life was hid, &c., and that in common with a community to join which they had left another. Let them keep step with their new comrades, and strip themselves, as their new associates do, of the uniform they wore in that other regiment. 2. This second catalogue of vices summarizes the various forms of wicked hatred in contrast with the various forms of wicked love in the other list. The fierce rush of unhallowed passion is put first, and the contrary flow of chill malignity second; for in the spiritual world as in the physical, a storm blowing from one quarter is usually followed by violent gales from the opposite. Lust ever passes into cruelty, and dwells "hard by hate." Malice is evil desire iced. (1) Anger. There is a righteous anger which is part of the new man; but here it is the inverted reflection of the earthly and passionate lust after the flesh. If anger rises keep the lid on, and don't let it get the length of wrath. But do not think that its suppression is enough, saying, "I did not show it"—strip off anger, the emotion as well as the manifestation. But "I have naturally a hot disposition"; but Christianity was sent to subdue and change natural dispositions. (2) Malice. Anger boils over in wrath, and then cools down into malignity; and malice as cold and colourless as sulphuric acid, and burning like it is worse than boiling rage. (3) It is significant that while the expressions of wicked love were deeds, those of wicked hate are words. The "blasphemy" of Authorized Version is bitter "railing" of Revised Version—speech that injures, which when directed against God is blasphemy, and against man vituperation. 4. Lying has its proper place here because it comes from a deficiency of love or a predominance of selfishness. A lie ignores my brother's claims upon me, and is poisoned bread instead of the heavenly manna of pure truth. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *The flesh to be crucified*:—A brave officer said once to his soldiers in a day of battle, "Unless you kill your enemies they will kill you." In like manner may it be said, "Unless we crucify the flesh, it will be our everlasting ruin." *The mortification of the sinful principle in man*:—I. THE SINFUL PRINCIPLE HAS AN ACTIVE OUTWARD DEVELOPMENT. 1. It is mundane in its tendencies. "Your members," &c. It teaches the soul to grovel when it ought to soar. 2. It is manifested in acts of gross sensuality. "Fornication," &c. 3. It is recognized by debasing idolatry. Covetousness is insatiable lust for material possessions. II. THE ACTIVE OUTGOINGS OF THE SINFUL PRINCIPLE CALL FOR DIVINE VENGEANCE (ver. 6). The wrath of God is not a malignant unreasoning passion. Nor is it a figure of speech into which the maudlin philosophers of the day would fain resolve it, but an awful reality. III. THE INDULGENCE OF THE SINFUL PRINCIPLE IN MAN IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE NEW LIFE HE HAS IN CHRIST (ver. 7). IV. THAT THE SINFUL PRINCIPLE IN MAN IS THE SOURCE OF THE MOST MALIGNANT PASSIONS (vers. 8, 9). The former classification embraced sins which related more especially to self: this includes sins which have a bearing upon others. 1. There are sins of the heart and temper. 2. There are sins of the tongue. V. THE SINFUL PRINCIPLE IN MAN, AND ALL ITS OUT-GOINGS, MUST BE WHOLLY RENOUNCED AND RESOLUTELY MORTIFIED. "Now ye also put off all these" (vers. 8, 9). (G. Barlow.) *Denying the flesh*:—A brave officer said once to his soldiers in a day of battle, "Unless you kill your enemies, they will kill you." In like manner may it be said, "Unless we crucify the flesh, it will be our everlasting ruin." *Mortifying the flesh*:—Panting after perfection Dr. Judson strove to subdue every sinful habit and senseward tendency. Finding that for want of funds the Mission was languishing, he cast into the treasury his patrimonial estate. Finding that his nicety and love of neatness interfered with his labours among the filthy Karens, he sought to vanquish this repugnance by nursing those sick of most loathsome diseases. Finding that his youthful love of fame was not utterly extinguished, he threw into the fire his correspondence, including a letter of thanks he had received from the Governor-General of India, and every document which might contribute to his posthumous renown. And finding that his soul still clave unto the earth, he took temporary

leave of all his friends, and retired into a hut on the edge of the jungle, and subsisting on a little rice, for several weeks he gave himself entirely to communion with God. (*T. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Corruptions overcome by grace*.—My gardeners were removing a large tree which grew near a wall and as it would weaken the wall to stub up the roots, it was agreed that the stump should remain in the ground. But how were we to prevent the stump from sprouting, and so disarranging the gravel-walk. The gardener's prescription was, to cover it with a layer of salt. I mused awhile, and thought that the readiest way to keep down my ever-sprouting corruptions in future would be to sow them well with the salt of grace. O Lord, help me so to do. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Corruptions overcome gradually*.—

When Sir Christopher Wren was engaged in demolishing the ruins of old St. Paul's in order to make room for his new cathedral, he used a battering-ram with which thirty men continued to beat upon a part of the wall for a whole day. The workmen, not discerning any immediate effect, thought this a waste of time; but Wren, who knew that the internal motion thus communicated must be operating, encouraged them to persevere. On the second day, the wall began to tremble at the top, and fell in a few hours. If our prayers and repentances do not appear to overcome our corruptions, we must continue still to use these gracious battering-rams, for in due time by faith in Jesus Christ the power of evil shall be overthrown. Lord, enable me to give hearty blows by the power of thy Holy Spirit until the gates of hell in my soul shall be made to totter and fall. (*Ibid.*) *Covetousness*.—*Covetousness*.—1. Is a thirst for gain. When it burns in a man's heart, he must make some effort to obtain relief. He must try either to extinguish or satisfy it; to starve it by a religious self-denial, or feed it by a carnal indulgence. 2. Covetousness is ruinous to the individual, to the nation, and to the Church, and the elements which go to constitute the material prosperity of each contain in them the seeds of ruin. Hence the stern exhortation, "Take heed and beware of covetousness." I. *ITS COMPANY*. Things and men are known by the company they keep. It is the companion of fornication. The collocation is not accidental, it is uniform (1 Cor. v. 11; Eph. v. 3; 2 Pet. ii. 14.) When a man has plunged into some fashionable vice, he is indignant to find that the law makes him stand side by side with more vulgar convicts. So with covetous people who find themselves here branded with the same infamy as the unclean. All its respectability is here stripped off. Covetousness is like sins of uncleanness, in that it is—1. The unlawful direction and acting of desires not in themselves unlawful. Its great strength lies here. The complex apparatus of trade is innocently and dutifully set in motion; but who shall tell when it ceases to be impelled by virtue and begins to be impelled by vice. But the evil spirit enters, and when mammon gets the power, he allows others to retain the name: and the love of money takes the place of a God-fearing, man-loving sense of duty, as the motive-power in a man's soul. 2. It grows by indulgence. It grows by what it feeds on. The desire of the mind as well as of the body is inflamed by tasting its unhallowed gratification. It burns in the breast like a fire, and fuel added, increases its burning. And the man who makes money an object to be aimed at for its own sake is by common consent called a miser (miserable one). Mammon first entraps, and then tortures its victims. Many would be afraid to dally with approaches to lasciviousness (Prov. v. 5). But the two lusts are born brothers. 3. The least incipient indulgence displeases God, and sears the conscience. Although the disease may never grow to such a height that men will call you a miser, yet He who looketh on the heart is angry when He sees a covetous desire. He who has said "Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her," &c., has not a more indulgent rule whereby to judge this kindred sin. II. *ITS CHARACTER*. Idolatry. Other Scriptures less directly, but no less surely, affirm the same (Luke xvi. 13; 1 Tim. vi. 17; Job xxxi. 25-28). It is not the form or name of the idol that God regards, but the heart-homage of the worshipper. This leads us back to the former topic; idolatry is represented as uncleanness in the Bible. God is our Husband, and to transfer our affections from Him is adultery. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Covetousness*.—The Romans worshipped their standards; and the Roman standard happened to be an eagle. Our standard is only one-tenth of an eagle—a dollar—but we make all even by adoring it with tenfold devotion. (*Edgar A. Poe.*) *Gold in the heart*.—Mr. Fuller was one day taken into the Bank of England, where one of the clerks, to whom he had occasion to speak, showed him some ingots of gold. He took one of them into his hand, examined it with some care, and then, laying it down, remarked to his friend, "How much better to have this in the hand than in the heart!" *Covetousness is idolatry*.—L.

WHAT IS COVETOUSNESS? 1. There is a good covetousness (1 Cor. xii. 31), as of grace and glory. 2. Sinful: to love the world inordinately. (1) In the inordinate desire of riches—above God's glory and our own spiritual good. (2) In the sinful acquiring them (a) As to matter—another's goods (1 Kings xxi.). (b) As to manner and means—unjust (Prov. x. 2; xxviii. 8). (3) In the wrongful retaining them—not laying them out for the ends God has appointed.

II. WHAT IS IDOLATRY? 1. External. 2. Internal: worship given to what is not God (John iv. 24).

III. HOW IS COVETOUSNESS IDOLATRY? 1. In that (1) man admires riches (Rom. xi. 33). (2) Loves it (Matt. xxii. 37). (3) Desires it (Psa. lxxiii. 25). (4) Fears losing it (Matt. x. 28). (5) Trusts on (1 Tim. vi. 17; Mark x. 23, 24). (6) Grieves for the loss of. (7) Rejoices in (Phil. iv. 4). (8) Labours after (Matt. vi. 33). 2. Objections. (1) "I worship no images." Yes, of thine own fancy. (2) "I do not fall down to them." But in thy soul, and that is the principal. (3) "I offer no sheep or rams." But thyself. The Phœnicians and Carthaginians offered men, but yours is the greater sin. For they offered bodies not souls, others not themselves. (4) "We do not look upon them as gods." You do in effect, because as the chiefest good. You know them to be no gods, and yet worship them as such. **IV. SIGNS.** 1. Such as whose thoughts run more upon earth than heaven (Luke xii. 22, 25, 29). 2. Whose joy and grief depend on outward successes (Luke xii. 19). 3. Who strive to be rich, but no matter how. 4. Whose desires increase with their estate. 5. Who grudge the time spent in Divine duty (Amos viii. 5). 6. Whose hearts are upon the world, while their body is before God (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). 7. Who do not improve the estates God has given them (Matt. xxv. 24–25).

V. USE. Avoid it. Consider—1. How odious it is to God (Psa. x. 3). 2. How injurious to our neighbour. 3. Dangerous to us (1 John ii. 15; 1 Tim. vi. 10). It fills the heart with anxiety (1 Tim. vi. 9–10) and will certainly keep us from heaven (1 Cor. vi. 9–10). 4. Foolish in itself. (1) To act so much below ourselves. (2) To throw away our souls for vanity (Matt. xvi. 26). (3) To spend that little time on earth, wherein we should prepare for heaven. (4) To make oneself a slave for he knows not whom (Psa. xxxix. 6; Eccles. iv. 8).

VI. MEANS. 1. Think much of the vanity of earth and the glory of heaven. 2. Act faith in the promises (Psa. xxxvi. 25; Heb. xiii. 5). 3. Meditate on the universal providence of God, and His fatherly care (Luke xii. 31, 32; Matt. vi. 25, &c.). 4. Be much in prayer. 5. Often remember the text (1 John v. 21). (*Bp. Beveridge.*)

The idolatry of covetousness:—Idolatry is the earliest thing mentioned in the decalogue, and coveting the latest. The two tables bend round and touch each other so closely that he who breaks the tenth commandment breaks the first. The inordinate love and pursuit of wealth are simply heathenish, and are put down on the same level as the worship of images. Gold seems in many respects very like a god. **I. IN THE ATTRIBUTES IT POSSESSES.** 1. Omniscience. Wealth seems to know everything. Let any novelty be presented and men will know of it instantly. You cannot keep any plan or line of business secret if there is any money in it. 2. Omnipresence. The least opening for business invites competition, and so wealth rushes in. "Mammon wins its way where seraphs might despair." 3. Omnipotence. How many of us know to our sorrow the power of riches! the overmastering, crushing opposition it sets up before every poor man's enterprise. Gold rules the world, covers the land, buys up the offices of the nation, sways the sceptre of social influence. **II. THE WORSHIP IT ATTRACTS.** 1. The roar of excited men who clamour with each other in the death grapple of competition, how little does it differ from the cries of the Town Hall of Ephesus. 2. But this is not mere lip-worship. The devotees are as desperately in earnest as the priests of Baal on Carmel. Body and soul are consecrated. **III. THE FAVOURS IT BESTOWS.** The fine residence, the gorgeous apparel, the flowing wine, the tremulous obeisance of the seedy gentleman, the obsequious flattery of the lady whose charms have faded, the adulation of the crowd, the flutter in the market, the cringe of ancient enemies; and then the fine funeral, and the marble tomb. "Verily they have their reward." Wealth, as a duty, is not remarkably beneficent, but it would be uncandid to say that he has nothing to bestow on his faithful devotees. The world likes priestcraft; and the priest has power according to his nearness to his duty, and to the faith of the populace. And hence there is no hierarchy so absolutely revered, feared, and obeyed as those who crowd the temples of gold. **IV. THE SCOURGES IT INFLICTS.** The temples of heathenism are beautiful, but the gods are ugly because malignant. They are supposed to maltreat and even eat their subjects, and mammon is well typified in them. His most noticeable characteristic is that he loves

to trample on and devour his devotees. "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall." There are some sins which seem to be considered by the Almighty as sufficient for their own punishment, such as pride and anger; passion means suffering. So here this trusting in riches possesses a kind of inflated power to baloon one up to such a height that he suffocates and falls headlong into ruin. It is painful to see how rich men pitch on each other when any one falls into difficulty. The horrible heartlessness with which a neighbourhood will devour a broken estate reminds one of the fabled furies. Conclusion: 1. See, then, why God strikes against this sin. It sets up another god in the place of Him. One of the Roman Emperors offered Jesus a place beside Jupiter. It would not do then, neither will it now. God will have all or none. 2. See how covetousness destroys grace and piety. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" 3. See how it ruins all one's future, "Ephraim is joined to his idols," &c. But when one's god is gone, where is he! Shrouds have no pockets. 4. See how it prevents all hope of progress in a Church. "Will a man rob God," &c. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh.—*Dissuatives from evil*:—I. THE DESTRUCTIVE CONSEQUENCE. 1. The cause, "fornication," &c., not that we should conclude that it is peculiar to these sins alone to excite the Divine wrath, but because upon these which especially overthrow human happiness God is especially provoked (*Heb. x. 31*). The apostle wished to point out distinctly the cause of human misery and Divine judgment. (1) That God might be cleared from all suspicion of injustice. God the Father of mercies is not indifferent to evil, but is incensed against it. (2) To throw a restraint on the wicked. Those who are proof against reason and right may yield to fear. 2. The effect. The wrath of God; or the punishment inflicted by wrath. Augustine says, "The anger of God is not the perturbation of an excited mind, but the tranquil constitution of righteous judgment. This wrath is particularly connected with sins of the kind referred to here (*Gen. vi. 11, 17; xviii. 20; xix. 24*). 3. The persons subjected to it—"Children of disobedience." Two crimes are involved—unbelief and disobedience, the latter as the genuine offspring of the former (*1 Peter iii. 20; Matt xxiv. 38-39; Gen. xix. 14; Zech. vii. 11*). 4. From these things draw the following instructions. (1) Under public calamities we must not murmur against God; but impute them to our sins. (2) Oppose to solicitation to sin the consideration of the Divine wrath. (3) Nothing is more to be desired than the Divine favour, nothing more to be dreaded than the Divine wrath. (4) God is not so much provoked by sin as by the obstinacy of the sinner. (5) However much the children of disobedience flatter themselves, the wrath now cometh upon them, and will come, and will not tarry. (6) The same holds good of God's children when disobedient. II. THE REMOVAL OF THE CAUSE (*ver. 7*). Sin is the reigning cause of a wicked life; but sin is not living in you, but mortified; the cause, therefore, having ceased, the effect ceases. 1. From the consideration of their former life learn—(1) Nothing is more unhappy than unrenewed man. To walk in sin with pleasure is to hasten towards hell with pleasure (*Rom. vi. 23*). (2) The fruits of a man in a corrupt state are not works preparatory to grace, or, deserving of eternal life—congruity, as the schoolmen say—but are preparatory to hell, and meritorious of eternal death, from condignity. 2. From their new state learn—(1) It is not idle for the renewed to call to mind their former state, inasmuch as the apostle reminds the Colossians of theirs, not to upbraid, but to encourage them. (2) Christians ought not to take it amiss when ministers remind them of their former state (*Rom. vi. 19; 1 Cor. vi. 10-11; Eph. ii. 11-13*). (3) The regenerate receive a twofold advantage from a notice of this kind. They are excited (a) To gratitude (*Rom. vi. 17; 1 Tim. i. 12-13*). (b) To newness of life (*Rom. xiii. 12; Eph. v. 8*). (*Bishop Davenant.*) The wrath of God a present thing:—It is not merely a thing of the past, as seen in the deluge, the destruction of Sodom, the overthrow of Israel in the wilderness; nor a thing wholly reserved for the world to come. It cometh as an enduring and essential principle of the Divine government. In physical debility and disease, in a shattered constitution, in dethroned reason, in destroyed power, you often witness the working of a righteous retribution, the marks of Divine indignation against sin. A sight of terrible penalty under God's law is it, to see a man carrying to a premature grave the evidences in his body of God's curse on sins of sensuality; to see the rich man, who has lived in avarice for gold, and has amassed it in millions, now in his old age unable to enjoy it, and haunted with the idea of dying in a workhouse; to see a man of pleasure, who has tried and exhausted all the resources of the world in finding it, now ending

his days as a gloomy maniac. Yet these cases are nothing as compared with "the wrath to come;" only a few drops from a dark and dismal cloud, which will hereafter discharge itself in a storm of "judgment and fiery indignation." (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The children of disobedience*:—Men are sent to the ants to learn diligence, to the conies to learn that there is a way which terminates in a great rock, to the locusts to learn how littles, when combined, may become mighty, sufficient for all the duty and obligation of the day. What if it be found at last that all the lower orders and ranks of creation have been obedient, dutiful, loyal, and that the child only has wounded the great heart. "The ox knoweth his owner," &c. God has no trouble with His creatures—no trouble with His great constellations—they never mutinied against Him; He has had no trouble with His forests, no rebel host ever banded themselves there. Where has His sorrow lain! His own child, His beloved one, in whom He has written, in fairest hues, the perfectness of His own beauty, that child has lifted up his puny fist and smitten Him, not in the face only, but in His heart of love, which can be only forgiven by shedding sacrificial blood. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Effects of disobedience*:—"Let the sickles alone," said a farmer to his son, who was left in the fields while the reapers went to dinner. James obeyed his father for a time; but at length he grew lonesome, and took up a sickle, "just to look at it." He then felt its edge, and at last thought he would cut "one handful." In so doing, he cut his little finger, inflicting a wound which rendered the middle joint useless for life. When it was healed an ugly scar and a stiff finger were lasting mementoes of his disobedience. Disobedience to his heavenly Father leaves a scar on the sinner's soul, and lessens his capacity for virtue. (*E. Foster.*) *The wrath of God*:—The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the higher the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. If God should only withdraw His hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it. (*Jonathan Edwards.*) But now ye also put off all these.—*The believer's view of past sin*:—I once walked into a garden with a lady to gather some flowers. There was one large bush whose branches were bending under the weight of the most beautiful roses. We both gazed upon it with admiration. There was one flower on it which seemed to shine above all the rest in beauty. This lady pressed forward into the thick bush, and reached far over to pluck it. As she did this a black snake, which was hid in the bush, wrapped itself round her arm. She was alarmed beyond all description, and ran from the garden screaming, and almost in convulsions. During all that day she suffered very much with fear; her whole body trembled, and it was a long time before she could be quieted. That lady is still alive. Such is her hatred now of the whole serpent race, that she has never since been able to look at a snake, even though it were dead. No one could ever persuade her to venture again into a cluster of bushes, even to pluck a beautiful rose. Now this is the way the sinner acts who truly repents of his sins. He thinks of sin as the serpent that once coiled itself round him. He hates it. He dreads it. He flies from it. He fears the places where it inhabits. He does not willingly go into the haunts. He will no more play with sin than this lady would afterwards have fondled snakes. (*Bishop Meade.*) *Conversion and the old nature*:—There are a great many men who are like one of my roses. I bought a *Gloire de Dijon*. It was said to be one of the few ever-blooming roses. It was grafted on a manetti-stalk—a kind of dog-rose, a rampant and enormous grower, and a very good stalk to graft fine roses on. I planted it. It threw the first part of the summer, and the last part of the summer it grew with great vigour; and I quite gloried, when the next spring came, in my *Gloire de Dijon*. It had wood enough to make twenty such roses as these finer varieties usually have; and I was in the amplitude of triumph. I said, "My soil suits it exactly in this climate; and I will write an article for the *Monthly Gardener*, and tell what luck I have had with it." So I waited and waited and waited till it blossomed; and behold! it was one of these worthless, quarter-of-a-dollar, single-blossomed roses. And when I came to examine it I found that it was grafted, and that there was a little bit of a graft down near the ground, and that it was the manetti-sprout that had grown to such a prodigious size. Now, I

have seen a great many people converted, in whom the conversion did not grow, but the old nature did. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

I. THE GENERAL PERSUASION.

1. The circumstance of time—"now." Ye did indulge in these as long as sin lived, but now, since sin is mortified, ye must put these things away (Rom. xiii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 5-6).

2. The act commanded. The word may be explained either to "put off" as men put off their old and dirty clothes, or to "lay aside" from the affections and senses, as dead bodies shut up in sepulchres. The last best agrees with "mortify."

3. Learn then—(1) We must not account sin a pleasure, but a thing to be hated as deadly poison, or to be avoided as a putrid carcase. (2) This putting off applies to all sin, of which anger, &c., are only samples.

II. We are to put off SINS OF THE HEART.

1. What they are. (1) Anger, an inordinate desire to injure one's neighbour for some past offence. Damascenus defines it as "an appetite for revenge, and in this what the schoolmen term the "formal" of anger is contained. (2) Wrath denotes the hasty excitement of this passion, and that accession of blood round the heart which schoolmen call the "material" of anger. "Wrath," says Damascenus, "is the boiling up of the blood around the heart, and arises from the kindling of resentment." (3) Malice some affirm to be that vicious propensity which infects all the affections and desires, and inclines them to evil; and Bernard, "the taste for evil," which makes evil sweet and good insipid. But it is rather that machination of evil in the heart which is wont to arise from anger in malevolent minds (Gen. iv. 5; xxvii. 41).

2. The reasons why they should be extirpated. Because—(1) Through anger wisdom is lost, and reason for the time extinguished (Eccles. vii. 19). "Anger is a short madness." (2) Justice is violated; for while an exasperated mind sits in judgment everything which its fury may suggest it thinks right (James i. 20; Gen. xxxiv.; cf. xlix. 7). (3) The kindness of social life is lost (Prov. xxii. 24). (4) The illumination of the Spirit is shut out. (5) Forgiveness of sin is hindered (Matt. xi. 26). (6) The attribute of God is usurped with sacrilegious audacity (Prov. xx. 22; Deut. xxxii. 35). An angry man makes himself the judge, and would have God the executioner.

3. But is all anger unlawful? No! for God has implanted in the mind the faculty of anger, and Christ was angry (Mark iii. 5). Hence the apostle enjoins, "Be ye angry and sin not." (1) Anger is good—(a) Which arises from a good motive, viz., from the love of God or our neighbour. (b) Which tends to a good end, the glory of God and the correction of our neighbour. (c) Which proceeds according to a good rule, awaiting or following the determination of reason. Basil would have anger to be a bridled horse, which obeys reason as a curb. (2) Anger is evil—(a) Which arises from a bad beginning—hatred or love of praise. (b) Which tends to a bad end—revenge and our neighbour's injury. (c) Which is exercised in an improper manner, forestalling the judgment of reason.

III. SINS OF THE MOUTH, arising from the inordinate affections of the heart.

1. What they are. (1) Evil speaking. Blasphemy means injuring the fame of another by evil words. (a) It is offered to God; first, when that which is repugnant to His nature is attributed to Him; secondly, when that which most befits Him is taken away; thirdly, when that which is His property is attributed to the creature. So heinous was it that God made it a capital crime (Lev. xxiv. 16, 23). (b) It is offered to man (Rom. iii. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 13; Tit. iii. 2), and is secret (detraction) and open (railing). Rash and angry persons take the open course; the crafty and malicious the secret. Its grievousness is evident. First, it greatly injures the person himself. His reputation, a principal external blessing is wounded, and is not easy to repair, since the quantity of the loss cannot be estimated. Secondly, it greatly injures those who take it up, engendering as it does suspicions and strifes (Psa. cxx. 2). Thirdly, it is a great injury done to God. For as He is praised in the saints when the works He effects in them are praised; so when they are defamed He is defamed. (2) Corollaries. (a) Such as respect the blasphemers. First, the habit argues an unregenerate state, for it is one of the principal deeds of the old man. Second, slanderers are unhappy, for, as Nazianzen says, "It is the extreme of misery to place one's comfort not in one's own happiness, but in the evils of others." Third, they are the disciples of the devil (Rev. xii. 10). (b) Such as respect hearers. First, since it is so great a crime, those who delight to hear it are not void of sin. Each has a devil; this in the ear, that in the tongue. Second, it behoves a pious man to turn away from and reprove slanderers, and to defend his brother (Prov. xxv. 23; Psa. ci. 5; Job xxix. 17). (c) Respecting those injured. First, grieve more for the slanderer than for what he says. Second, slander harms not a good conscience. Third, there is the counterbalancing testimony of conscience and good men. Fourth, do

not be provoked to return evil for evil (1 Cor. v. 12). 2. Filthy communication (Eph. ii. 29; 1 Cor. xv. 33). This is to be avoided because—(1) It makes that most precious and peculiar faculty of speech foul and ridiculous. (2) It indicates a corrupt mind. (3) It is opposed to the sacred profession of a Christian (Eph. v. 3-4). (4) It corrupts speaker and hearers. Wherefore rebuke it in others. Avoid it yourselves. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Anger*:—There is an anger that is damnable; it is the anger of selfishness. There is an anger that is majestic as the frown of Jehovah's brow; it is the anger of truth and love. If a man meets with injustice, it is not required that he should not be roused to meet it; but if he is angry after he has had time to think upon it that is sinful. The flame is not wrong, but the coals are. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The evils of bad temper*:—There are households where this demon of anger governs all at its pleasure, incessantly troubling the concord of husband and wife, the union of parents and children, and the peace of masters and servants. There is nothing done, nothing said, but in anger. You would say of these houses, that they are the fabled cavern of Eolus, where the winds shut up in it are heard night and day, roaring and blustering. There is no climate, no sea, no coast in all the earth, where storms are greater or more frequent. For whereas natural tempests happen but at some seasons of the year, in these miserable houses no calm is ever seen; and there needs but one petty action, one word, yea, one look, to raise storms of many days' continuance: as it is said of certain lakes in the mountains of Berne, that if one cast but a stone into them, the surrounding air becomes turbid, and is immediately filled with winds and clouds, which soon issue lightning, thunder, and excessive rain. Yea, there are some whose passion is so violent, that it cannot be kept within the enclosure of their houses. It issues out of doors, and without respect to the faces of those who pass by, without apprehension of scandal, audaciously shows itself in public, and acts its tragedies in the presence of all the world. (*J. Daillé.*) *Control of temper*:—When M. de Persigny was French Minister of the Interior he received a visit one day from a friend. A warm discussion arose between them. Suddenly an usher entered and handed the minister a note. On opening it he at once changed his tone of voice, and assumed a quiet and urbane manner. Puzzled as to the contents of the note, and by the marked effect it had suddenly produced upon the minister, his friend cast a furtive glance at it, when, to his astonishment, he perceived that it was simply a plain sheet of paper. More puzzled than ever the gentleman took his leave, and proceeded to interrogate the usher. "Sir," said he, "here is the explanation, which I must beg you to keep secret. My master is very liable to lose his temper. As he is aware of his weakness, he has ordered me, each time his voice is raised sufficient to be audible in the ante-room, without delay to place a sheet of paper in an envelope and take it to him. That reminds him that his temper is getting the better of him, and he at once calms himself. Just now I heard his voice rising, and immediately carried out my instructions." (*W. Bazendale.*) *Malice*:—The word is of great extent, and signifies in general that venom and evil of sin which is diffused through any one of our passions, whichever it be. But here, as frequently elsewhere, I suppose it is taken for the malignity of anger; when a mischievous and vindictive stomach inwardly broods on its passion, and feeds its fire under the ashes, hatching some ill turn for the person it aims at, and waiting for opportunity to break out. Such a man works under ground, as miners do, and appears not till the ruin he prepares for his enemy is fully ready. His passion is like a stinted fire, that does not burn up till its season. Of all kinds of anger, there is none more black and malignant in itself, or more noxious and pernicious in its effects. Wherefore the apostle calls it malice, naughtiness, or malignity particularly; and it seems to be the same thing he elsewhere calls bitterness. (*J. Daillé.*) *Blasphemy, its nature*:—Though the term, in our tongue, imports words spoken to the offence of God, when things unworthy of his greatness, and holiness, and truth, are attributed to Him, or those which belong to Him are denied Him; or when that which is proper to His divinity is communicated to creatures; yet in the Greek, that is, in the language the apostle speaks, the word "blasphemy" generally signifies any offensive, injurious speech, whoever it concerns, whether God, or angels, or men. The truth is, this word, if we respect its origin or etymology, simply denotes injuring the reputation, or offending some one's honour. Consequently, St. Paul uses it not only here, but also in other places, to signify such revilings and detractions as are directed properly to men, and not to God (1 Cor. iv. 13; Titus iii. 2). (*Ibid.*) *The evil speaker*:—While the Lord desires us to consider the good qualities with which He has endowed His creatures,

to the end that we might praise and esteem them, and imitate them, the evil-speaker looks upon nothing but their defects and vices. And as vultures fly over fair meadows, and flowery and sweet-smelling fields, and alight only on dunghills, and places full of carrion and infection; and as flies, without touching the sound parts of the body, fasten only upon sores and ulcers; so the evil-speaker, without so much as noticing what is graceful and happy in the lives of men, falls upon that which is weak and sickly in them. If they have chanced to stumble, as is very ordinary in this infirmity of our nature, it is upon this that he fixes; in this he takes pleasure, this he gladly exposes and publishes, amplifying and exaggerating it with his infernal rhetoric. It is by this he knows persons; it is by this he marks them out and describes them; as bad painters, who represent nothing so exactly as the moles and scars of the faces which they draw, the deformity of the nose, the protuberance of the lips, and other such marks which they have from the birth, or receive by some accident. Charity covers sins, and forgets them; the evil-speaker divulges them, and remembers them perpetually, and takes out of the grave that which had been buried in oblivion, and brings it to light again. He loves pollution, and feeds on nothing but poisons and filth. And for this end he has always a sufficient store of such provision by him. His memory is a magazine, or rather a sink, where he heaps up the villainies, the sins, and the scandals, not of his own neighbourhood, or his own quarter only, but of the whole city; yea, if he possibly can, of the whole state. It is from this diabolical treasury that he derives the subject of his sweetest thoughts and most pleasing entertainments. These things are his perfumes and his dainties. But he is not content only to rake together and lay open the imperfections which he finds in his neighbours; he is so malignant that he feigns more, and fancies some where there are none. He spreads it abroad for truth; and that he may persuade others of it, he artificially colours his fictions, giving out shows for truths, and shadows for substances. He so bitterly hates all good, that where he sees any he bespatters, blackens, and disguises it, and causes it to pass for evil. And as the snail sullies the lustre of the fairest flowers with its sordid slime; just so this bad man, by the poison of his malignity, defames the most grateful virtues, and turns them into vices. He takes valour for temerity, and patience for stupidity; justice for cruelty, and prudence for craftiness. Him that is liberal he calls prodigal, and the frugal person covetous. If you be religious, he will not fail to accuse you of superstition; and if you be free and generous, and far from superstition, he will accuse you of being profane. In fact, there is no virtue nor perfection for which this wicked man has not found an infamous name, taken from the vice that borders next upon it. To this iniquity he usually adds a base and black piece of treachery, when, to cause his poisons to be the more easily swallowed, he mischievously sugars them, beginning his detractions with a preface of praise, and with an affected commendation of the persons whom he intends to revile; protesting, at his entrance, that he loves and respects them, for the purpose of creating a belief that it is nothing but the mere force and evidence of truth that constrains him to speak evil of them. He kisses his man at meeting, and then murders him, as Joab formerly did: he crowns his victims before he kills them: a fraud which, notwithstanding its ordinary occurrence, is the blackest that can be perpetrated. (*Ibid.*) *Slander cannot be recalled*:—A lady presented herself to Philip Neri one day, accusing herself of being a slanderer. "Do you frequently fall into this fault?" inquired he. "Yes, my father, very often." "My dear child," said Philip, "your fault is great, but the mercy of God is still greater. For your penance do as follows: Go purchase a chicken, and walk a certain distance, plucking the feathers as you go along. Your walk finished, return to me." Accordingly she repaired to the market, did as she was bidden, and in a short time returned. "Ah," said Philip, "you have been very faithful to the first part of my orders. Retrace your steps, and gather up one by one all the feathers you have scattered." "But, father," exclaimed the poor woman, "I cast them carelessly on every side; the wind carried them in every direction. How can I recover them?" "Well, my child," replied he, "so is it with your words of slander; like the feathers, they have been scattered. Call them back if you can. Go and sin no more." (*W. Barendale.*) *Filthy conversation*:—As offensive breath betokens some inward indisposition and corruption; so filthy and dishonest conversation discovers the impurity and unchastity that are in the soul of him who uses it. Hence the apostle in another place expressly puts this among other parts of Christian sanctity, that our conversation be pure, chaste, and honest (Eph. v. 3-4; iv. 29). (*J. Daillé.*) *Purity of conversation*:—It is related that General Grant

was once sitting in his tent with officers around him, when a general came in in much glee and said : " I have a good story to tell ; there are no ladies present, I believe." " No," said General Grant, " but there are gentlemen present." The man's countenance fell ; the good story was never told. Some Christians could learn a good lesson from the great commander's remark. (*Christian, Boston.*)

Vers. 9-11. Lie not one to another : seeing that ye have put off the old man and his deeds.—*Spiritual renewal in Christ*.—The apostle enforces his exhortation by two arguments : first, " Ye died with Christ," &c. ; second, " Ye have put off the old man," &c. I. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS THE SUBJECT OF A CHANGE. The " old man " refers to our degenerate nature, and " its deeds " the practical outcome of this degeneracy. The " new man " is the new nature, for the creation of which God has provided in His Son. The grand change takes place in the heart, and is perfected in the life. This change is—1. Divine in its origin. It is not the result of human skill or self-development. 2. Progressive in its nature, " which is being renewed." There is in every case a commencement, whether known or not, at regeneration ; but as in the case of the new-born infant, its powers have to be expanded and renewed day by day. At no point in this progress can the Christian say, " I have attained or am perfect." There is in this fact (1) a solace which may well prevent discouragement at the consciousness of manifold imperfections ; and (2) a stimulus which should lead us to seek with ardour the influence and evidence of a progressive piety. A statue under the chisel of the sculptor is ever being renewed, until the marble form assumes a perfect likeness of the ideal ; so under the hand of God the soul grows in the attributes of spiritual life and the beauties of holiness. 3. Glorious in its model. " After the image of Him." Christ is " the image of the invisible God," and conformity to Him is the pattern of our renewal. This includes much more than the mere restoration of the image lost by Adam. 4. Grand in its result. " Renewed into knowledge " ; *i.e.*, knowledge is not the means, but the purpose. It is that of God and things Divine. To know God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent, is life eternal. To the attainment of some kinds of knowledge character is essential, and pre-eminently it is so here. It is to be an intuition—not a cold intellectual acquisition (Rom. xii. 2 ; Eph. iii. 16-19). Life without this change is vanity. The " old man " may be rich and strong, but the " new man " only can see God and enter heaven. " Except a man be born again," &c. II. IN THIS SPIRITUAL RENEWAL HUMAN DISTINCTIONS ARE OF NO AVAIL OR ADVANTAGE. 1. National distinctions : " Greek and Jew." One nation has no advantage over another. The sensual Hindoo, the literary Chinaman, the stolid Hottentot, the energetic European, are alike by sin removed from the life of God ; and the gospel is equally adapted to all. 2. Ritual distinctions (Gal. vi. 15). A man born in a Christian country requires a change of heart as much as one who dwells in a pagan land. There may be much higher external privilege in one case than in the other, but that does not confer the change, nor is it to be confounded with it. 3. Political distinction : " Barbarian, Scythian." The Scythians were at the lowest point of the scale of civilization. The savage and the polished citizen require alike the washing of regeneration. 4. Social distinction : " Bond, free." The diversities of condition which divide men are unrecognized. Here rich and poor meet together. III. IN THIS SPIRITUAL CHANGE CHRIST IS EVERYTHING. " All and in all, Christ." 1. He is the principle of the change. Every Christian is created anew in Christ Jesus. 2. He is its sustenance and strength. As the renewed soul feeds on Him by faith, so it grows up in Him. There can be no advancement away from Him. 3. He is its perfection. We are to be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) The new nature wrought out in the new life.—I. THE CHANGE OF THE SPIRIT'S DRESS. 1. We have the same idea before. " Death " is equivalent to the " putting off of the old," and " resurrection " to " putting on of the new." The figure of the change of dress to express change of moral character is frequent in Scripture. " Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness," Zechariah saw the high-priest change his filthy garments for festal robes when God " caused his iniquity to pass from him." See also Christ's parables of the Wedding Garment and Prodigal Son, and Paul's exhortation to Christ's soldiers to put off their night-gear, " the works of darkness," &c. In every reformatory the first thing done is to strip off and burn the rags of the new-comers, and then give them a bath, and dress them in clean clothes. Character is the garb of the soul. Habit means costume and custom.

2. The apostle hazards a mixed metaphor—"Put on the new man"—to show that what is put off and on is much more truly part of themselves than an article of dress. There is a deeper self which remains, the true man, the centre of personality. Thus the figure expresses the depth of the change and the identity of the person. 3. This entire change is assumed as having been realized at that point of time when the Colossians began to put their trust in Christ. (1) Of course the contrast between the old and the new is greatest in converted heathens. With us, where Christianity is widely diffused, there is less room for a marked revolution. Many can point to no sudden change, or if they have been conscious of a change, have passed through it as gradually as night passes into day. (2) But there are those who have grown up without God who must become Christians by sudden conversion. And why should this be regarded as impossible? Is it not often the case that some ignored principle has come, like a meteor in the atmosphere, into a man's mind, and exploded and blown to pieces the habits of a lifetime? And why should not this be so with the truth of God's great love in Christ? (3) The New Testament does not insist that everybody must become a Christian in the same fashion. Sometimes there will be a dividing line between the two states as sharp as the boundary of adjoining kingdoms; sometimes the one will melt imperceptibly into the other. Sometimes the revolution will be as swift as that of the wheel of a locomotive, sometimes slow and silent as the movement of a planet. 4. But however brought about, this is a certain mark of the Christian life. (1) If there be any reality in the act by which we have laid hold of Christ, old things will have passed away—tastes, desires, &c.—and all things will have become new, because we move with a new love, have a new hope, aim, song. (2) This is a most needful test for those who put too much stress on believing and feeling. Nor is it less needful to remember that this is a consequence of faith in Christ. Nothing else will strip the foul robes from a man. To try to begin with the second stage is like trying to build a house at the second story. 5. The practical conclusion: "Seeing that." The change, though taking place in the inmost nature, needs to be wrought into character and wrought out in conduct. The leaven is in the dough, but to knead it thoroughly into the mass is a lifelong task, only accomplished by our continually repeated efforts. 6. So the apparently illogical, Put off what you have put off, and put on what you have put on, is vindicated. It means, Be consistent with your deepest selves; carry out in detail what you have already done in bulk. Cast out the enemy already ejected from the central fortress, from the isolated positions he still occupies. You may put off the old man, for he is put off already; you must do so, for there is still danger of his again wrapping his poisonous rags about your limbs. II. THE CONTINUOUS GROWTH OF THE NEW MAN, ITS AIM AND PATTERN. 1. The new man is "being renewed"—a continuous process, perhaps slow and difficult to discern, but, like all powers and habits, it steadily increases; and a similar process works to opposite results in the old man (Eph. iv. 22). 2. This renewing is on the man, not by him. There is a Divine side. The renewing is not merely effected by us, nor due only to the vital power of the new man, but by the "renewing of the Holy Ghost." So there is hope for us in our striving, for He helps us. "Work out your own salvation," &c. 3. The new man is renewed "unto knowledge." Possibly there may be an allusion to the pretensions of the false teachers to a higher wisdom. There is but one way to press into the depths of the knowledge of God, viz., growth into His likeness. We understand one another best by sympathy. We know God only on condition of resemblance. For all simple souls, bewildered by the strife of tongues, and unapt for speculation, this is a message of gladness. 4. The new man is created after "the image," &c. As in the first creation, so in the new. But the old image consisted mainly in the reasonable soul, the self-conscious personality, the broad distinctions between men and animals. That humanity, in a sense, still has, though marred. The coin bears His image and superscription, though rusty and defaced. But the new image consists in holiness. Though the majestic infinitudes of God can have no likeness in man, we may be "holy as He is holy," be "imitators of God," "walk in love as He hath loved us," and "in the light as He is in the light." III. THE GRAND UNITY OF THIS CREATION. 1. "Christ is all." Wherever that new nature is found, it lives by the life of Christ. 2. All who are His partake of that common gift. He is in all. There is no privileged class, as these teachers affirmed. Necessarily, therefore, surface distinctions disappear. Paul's catalogue may be profitably compared with Gal. iii. 28. (1) Greek and Jew. The cleft of national distinctions, which never yawned more widely than

this, ceases to separate. (2) Circumcision and uncircumcision. Nothing makes deeper and bitterer antagonisms than differences in religious forms. (3) Barbarian, Scythian : which reflects the Greek contempt for outside races as of lower culture. A cultivated class is always tempted to superciliousness, and a half-cultivated class more so, as was the case at Colossæ. In the interests of the humble virtues Christianity wars against the pride of culture, the most heartless of all. (4) Bondman, freeman. That gulf was too wide for compassion to cross, though not for hatred to stride over. The effacement of this distinction is seen in the letter to Philemon which was despatched with this. 3. Christianity waged no direct war against these evils. Revolution cures nothing. The only way to get rid of evils engendered in the constitution of society is to elevate and change the tone of thought and feeling, and then they die of atrophy. Change the climate, and you change the vegetation. Until you do, neither mowing nor uprooting will get rid of the foul growths. So the gospel does with all these lines of demarcation between men. What becomes of the ridges of sand that separate pool from pool at low water? The tide comes up and over them, and makes them all one, gathered into the oneness of the great sea. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *New leaves pushing off the old* :—Manton says that "Old leaves, if they remain upon the trees through the autumn and the winter, fall off in the spring." We have seen a hedge all thick with dry leaves throughout the winter, and neither frost nor wind has removed the withered foliage, but the spring has soon made a clearance. The new life dislodges the old, pushing it away as unsuitable to it. So our old corruptions are best removed by the growth of new graces. "Old things are passed away ; behold all things are become new." It is as the new life buds and opens that the old, worn-out things of our former state are compelled to quit their hold of us. Our wisdom lies in living near to God, that by the power of His Holy Spirit all our graces may be vigorous, and may exercise a sin-expelling power over our lives : the new leaves of grace pushing off our old sere affections and habits of sin. With converts from the world it is often better not to lay down stringent rules as to worldly amusements, but leave the new life and its holier joys to push off the old pleasures. Thus it will be done more naturally and more effectively. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Life changed for the better* :—The leader of a very ungodly set of fellows in a dye-house became converted. Two of his fellow-workmen were so struck with the change that for a time they followed him in his new way, and behaved like good Christians. The ridicule and violence of the rest were, however, too strong for their resolution, and they turned to their old ways, while John, the first convert, clung close to Christ, and stood firm as a rock. John did not say much, but he answered scoffs and railing by a consistent Christian life. One day, however, when his fellow-workmen were boasting what good infidelity could do, and how much harm the Bible had done, his soul was stirred within him ; he turned round, and said, feelingly, but firmly, "Well, let us deal plainly in this matter, my friends, and judge of the tree by the fruit it bears. You call yourselves infidels. Let us see what your principles do. I suppose what they do on a small scale they will do on a large one. Now, there are Tom and Jem," pointing to the two who went with him and then turned back. "You have tried your principles on them. When they tried to serve Christ, they were civil, good-tempered, kind husbands and fathers. They were cheerful, hardworking, and ready to oblige. What have you made them? Look and see. They are cast down and cross; their mouths are full of cursing and filthiness; they are drunk every week; their children half clothed, their wives broken-hearted, their homes wretched. Now, I have tried Christ and His religion, and what has it done for me? You know well what I used to be. There was none of you who could drink so much, swear so desperately, and fight so masterly. I had no money, and no one would trust me. My wife was illused; I was ill-humoured, hateful, and hating. What has religion done for me? Thank God, I am not afraid to put it to you. Am I not a happier man than I was? Am I not a better workman and a kinder companion? Would I once have put up with what I now bear from you? I could beat any of you as easily now as ever. Why don't I? Do you ever hear a foul word from my mouth, or catch me at a public-house? Go and ask my neighbours if I have not altered for the better. Go and ask my wife. Let my house bear witness. God be praised, here is what Christianity has done for me; there is what infidelity has done for Jem and Tom." John stopped. The dyers had not a word to say. He used a logic they could not answer—the logic of a life. (*Family Treasury.*) *The nature of lying* :—If the following three circumstances concur—that what is uttered be

false, that it was wished to announce a falsehood, and that it was the intention to deceive—then it has the qualities of a lie complete; for it is false both materially and formally. (*Thomas Aquinas.*) *Kinds of lies*:—There are lies pernicious, officious, and jocose. The first is employed for the sake of injury; the second for that of assistance; the third for diversion. But the Scripture denies any one of these to be lawful (Rev. xxi. 8, xxii. 15; Prov. xii. 22; Eph. iv. 25). (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Lying against reason*:—Language was instituted, not that men might deceive one another by it, but that they should use it to tell their mutual thoughts; it is therefore an act unlawful to reason for one to utter words to signify that which he doeth not intend in his mind. (*Durandus.*) *Speech and mind must be at one*:—Language is a natural sign of the understanding; it is therefore unnatural that any one should signify that by his speech which does not exist in his mind. (*Aquinas.*) *The disgrace of lying*:—Clear and sound dealing is the honour of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in gold or silver, which may make the metal work better, but it debaseth it. For these windings and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goeth basely upon the belly, not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious; and therefore Montaigne saith prettily, "If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth is as to say that he is brave towards God and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God and shrinks from man." (*Lord Bacon.*) *Lying unsafe*:—A liar is sooner caught than a cripple. Liars should have good memories. A lie has no legs. (*Proverbs.*) *Falsehood difficult to maintain*:—It is difficult to maintain falsehood. When the materials of a building are solid blocks of stone, very rude architecture will suffice; but a structure of rotten materials needs the most careful adjustment in order to make it stand. (*Archbishop Whately.*) *The folly of lying*:—Truth is always consistent with itself, and needs nothing to help it out; it is always near at hand, sits upon our lips, and is ready to drop out before we are aware. A lie is troublesome, and sets a man's invention upon the rack; and one trick needs a great many more to make it good. It is like building on a false foundation, which continually stands in need of props to shore it up; and proves at last more chargeable than to have raised a substantial building at first on a true and solid foundation. (*Addison.*) *Acting a lie*:—Once while Rowland Hill was spending an evening at the house of a friend, a lady, who was there on a visit, retired, that her little girl of four years old might go to bed. She returned in about half an hour, and said to a lady near her: "She is gone to sleep; I put on my nightcap, and lay down by her, and she soon dropped off." Mr. Hill, who overheard this, said: "Excuse me, madam: do you wish your child to grow up a liar?" "Oh dear, no, sir; I should be shocked at such a thing." "Then bear with me when I say you must never act a lie before her. Children are very quick observers, and soon learn that that which assumes to be what it is not is a lie, whether acted or spoken." This was uttered with a kindness which precluded offence, yet with a seriousness that could not be forgotten. *Folly and misery of lying*:—The folly of lying consists in its defeating its own purpose. A habit of lying is generally detected in the end; and after detection, the liar, instead of deceiving, will not even be believed when he happens to speak the truth. Nay, every single lie is attended with such a variety of circumstances which lead to a detection, that it is often discovered. The use generally made of a lie is to cover a fault; but as this end is seldom answered, we only aggravate what we wish to conceal. In point even of prudence, an honest confession would serve us better. (*R. Gilpin.*) *Example of truthfulness*:—In the course of my acquaintance with Sir Robert Peel I never knew a man in whose truth and justice I had a more lively confidence. In the whole course of my communication with him I never knew an instance in which he did not show the strongest attachment to truth, and I never saw, in the whole course of my life, the smallest reason for suspecting that he stated anything which he did not firmly believe to be the fact. (*The Duke of Wellington.*) *Love of truth*:—One drizzly March evening, Stonewall Jackson was about to start at dusk for the residence of a friend a mile distant. "Is it imperative that you go to-night?" he was asked. "Not specially so," he replied. "Then why walk a mile in the rain if to-morrow will do as well?" "Well, I was talking with Colonel M—— this morning, and told him that my conversation with Cadet D—— was held in barracks on Monday. I have since recollected that it was held on the parade-ground, and that it was on Tuesday." "Does anything depend on this statement?" "Nothing whatever." "Why, in the name of reason,

then, do you walk a mile in the rain for a perfectly unimportant thing?" "Simply because I have discovered it was a misstatement, and I could not sleep comfortably to-night unless I corrected it." And go he did. (*H. O. Mackay.*) *Truth and falsehood*.—I. The NATURE of the sin of lying. The youngest of us knows the thing too well—the intentional leading of others to understand as true what we know to be false. 1. It may be by a lying word—a sin of the tongue, telling a lie, speaking a lie. 2. It may be by a lying look—a sin of the eye—looking a lie. 3. It may be a lying act—a sin of the hand—acting a lie. This is one of the most common forms of it, and least thought of. Still to keep by school-life: It is the hour for arithmetic. You have got some hard sums to do—too hard for you to master without more time than you have got now. You ask your neighbour to show you his slate, or you look over the shoulder of the boy before you who is always correct, you see you have been mistaken, rub out the wrong figures, fill in the right—in a moment you are on your feet as having finished your work, read off your sum, get your mark, and, with it, credit for being one of the few who are correct. That is a theft, but it is also a lie; it is stealing, but it is also lying. It was not the tongue, but the hand that did it. And here let me warn you against being parties to the lies of others. You are a young servant. You have broken accidentally a favourite china bowl. You do not know what to do. It is the first time such a thing has happened with you. You fear your mistress will be angry; perhaps you will have to replace it out of your half-year's wage, small as it is, just on purpose to make you more careful for the future. So instead of making an immediate and full confession, explaining how it took place, and saying you will be more careful in time to come, you take up the pieces, and lay them aside till you have opportunity of getting them out of the way; or you join the broken piece in as neatly as you can, set the bowl in the press, and the discovery is never made that you had any hand in it, till you are in another situation. You have been acting a lie; and I can hardly over-estimate the wrong you have done, most of all to yourself. When Jacob put the kid-skins on his hands and neck, and served up dainty meat to his old blind father Isaac, passing himself off for his brother Esau, he acted a lie; it was lying kindness. Before leaving this head, let me say a word regarding equivocating—that is, saying what has a double meaning—what may be taken up in two ways—the mere word true, the thing false—a kind of half-lie. II. The CHARACTER of this sin. It would take long to bring out all the bad features of it. Take the following: 1. It is a cowardly thing. No brave boy would lie. Cowards tell lies. Fear lies at the bottom of falsehood, and no liar need pretend to be brave. If I were in search of courageous boys, I would seek truthful ones. Our Scottish martyrs, the good Covenanters in olden times, were bright examples of strict adherence, not only to the truth, but to truthfulness; and where shall we find any more brave? A lie would have saved their lives—a single lying act—one lying bow of the head—but they would not. 2. It is a mean thing. It is not manly. Some of the cases I have mentioned, showing utter disregard to the feelings and interests of others, are base, shabby contemptible in the extreme. Never expect much at the hand of liars. They would sacrifice your interests to their own any day. 3. It is a God-dishonouring thing. How much is said of God in connection with truth! He is called the "God of truth." It is said, He "keepeth truth for ever." Every word of His is so unchangeable that His "truth" is just used for His "word"; they mean the same thing. He is called "God who cannot lie." His people are called "children that will not lie." Lying lips are said to be "an abomination" to Him. Truth is part of God's likeness—God's image. What dishonour, then, must be done to the God of truth by lying! You don't like lying things; a lying apple, beautiful and inviting without, but rotten within; a lying penny, bright but bad; a lying cat, that invites you to make much of it, and seems ever so friendly, and then bites or scratches you; a lying lottery, that promises a prize and gives a blank; a lying branch, that invites your foot to rest upon it, and then gives way and throws you to the ground. And God dislikes lying things too. This is the worst feature in it all—it is so dishonouring to God. This is seen in the way He speaks of it and punishes it. 4. It is a devilish thing. God is the "God of truth," the devil is the "father of lies," is a "liar," ay, and the father of liars. Lying is so vile a thing, and the word "lie" is so black, even to the world, even to the wicked, even to careless children, that they try to use it as little as possible, and it is spoken and thought lightly of, under another name—a "fib"; "it was only a fib"—a kind of harmless, innocent falsehood—a little lie—a softer name for a bad, black thing. III. The DANGER of it. 1. It is a growing sin. By this I

mean it is always increasing. One lie leads to and necessitates another, till no one knows where it will end. It is like a snowball, the further it is rolled the more it increases in size. Once or twice indulged, it soon becomes a habit. 2. It leads to and is linked with many other sins. You seldom find lying alone. It is something like drinking: it leads to almost every other sin, and all other sins seek its help, and hide themselves under it. I can hardly fancy a liar to be honest—either to fear God or regard man. 3. It degrades the whole character. When a habit of lying has been formed, we may well fear the worst. When truthfulness goes, the whole character goes along with it. There is an end to all confidence. For a young apprentice, or a young servant, there is nothing I fear so much as untruthfulness. IV. The PUNISHMENT of it. This is two-fold. 1. Here—in the present world. There is the loss of character; the loss of all respect. There is degradation; misery; shame. No one can respect a liar. It carries its own punishment with it. 2. Hereafter—in the world to come. Remember, dear children! that sooner or later the lie will be discovered—every lie! If not here, at any rate hereafter. V. Our DUTY regarding it. “Lie not: putting away lying—speak the truth.” 1. Strive against it. 2. Watch against it. You must not leave the door open. 3. Pray against it. 4. Seek to love the truth. Get the heart filled with the love of Christ, and then you will love the truth, and of necessity hate lying. Every effort will strengthen you, and the more you seek after the truth, the stronger you will become in it. Rather be simple than deceitful; rather be the cheated than the cheater, for it is written, “The Lord preserveth the simple.” (J. H. Wilson.)

Ver. 10. And have put on the new man.—In allusion to the white garments with which the primitive converts, having first laid aside their heathen vestments, were wont to be arrayed, St. Paul exhorts the Colossians to “put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man.” Christians should no more dishonour God and disgrace religion by any of the vices and passions of their natural state, than a courtier should insult his prince by appearing before him in squalid and ragged attire. But this is not enough—this is negative merely. The Christian must also actually array himself in the white and becoming dress of his new character and relation; as a courtier would not only abstain from insulting his prince by wearing defiled and mean garments, but would also be studious to attire himself, when approaching his presence, with the suitable and ornamental dress which he knew was required. (Bishop D. Wilson.) Which is being renewed.—Divine creation is not a mere mechanical work. It is wholly different from all work of ours. The builder builds a house, and when it is built he has done with it, and may never see it again; still the house stands. An artist paints his picture; it passes from the easel, it is hung in the gallery; he has done with it; he does not stand there day by day, with brush and palette, keeping the yellows brilliant, and the purples rich, and the browns mellow. A poet writes his verses, prints them, and he has done with them. The pathos, beauty, music remain; they touch the heart, charm the ear, kindle the imagination of millions in many ages and lands long after his own heart has ceased to throb, and the fire of his own genius is quenched. This is not the kind of relation between God and His creatures. He transcends the universe, but is immanent in it; it only exists as long as He sustains it. If He were to let it go it would pass into chaos—into nothing. Its enduring forces are the witnesses of His eternal power. The universe, this vast temple which God has made for Himself, would not stand if the Builder were to leave it; its foundations would shake, its walls be rent, it would sink in ruins. The glory of the mountain, lake, and river would not remain like the artist’s picture, if the Divine Artist were to leave it, every outline would lose its firmness and grace, every colour its softness or its strength, and the canvas would forget the beauty which had covered it. The revelation of thought which God has given in all created things would not remain if He, the great Teacher and Poet, ceased to live or ceased to speak; the great poem would perish, it remains only as long as living inspiration is in it. God creates, and, as we are accustomed to say, sustains. But the word is inadequate; it suggests too mechanical and external a relation between God and what He has made. His action might almost be described as a continuous creation. His power is within every created thing, active, persistent, or what He has created would cease to be. His thought is within every created thing, determining, maintaining its form, the characteristic mode of its existence. The sun rises over sea and land, and creates the day; but the sun renews the day from moment to moment, or the day would pass back into night. So were it not for

the great power of God ever active, all things would cease to be. The new man was created by Him; day by day the new man is kept new by the fresh and continuous activity of the same power that brought it into being. Every moment, in a true sense, we are born again, just as the stream has the continuous birth from the mountain, and the light from the sun; every moment we are arising anew from the dead, every moment there passes into us afresh the energy of the creative power; we are being renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us. And, therefore, as we begin to live in answer to our faith, so we continue to live in answer to our faith. We never stand apart and alone. Yesterday's inspiration gives us no light to-day; the power of the Holy Ghost that was active in us yesterday is unavailing for to-day's righteousness. And this new life is also a life of continuous prayer. What is the real meaning of indisposition to prayer? It means that the spirit of independence is mastering us, and for us independence means death. We are living only as God lives in us. (R. W. Dale, LL.D.)

The Image of God restored to men:—1. Man was created in the image of God. Righteous as God was righteous he saw God in his own nature; other intelligent creatures saw God in him; and God in His offspring saw Himself. 2. The image of God is now defaced. The substance remains, but its glorious attributes are gone. The form abides but the glorious features are not there. 3. To be right and blessed men must recover this image. Without likeness to God we are unable to appreciate His revelations, and incapable of filial intercourse. 4. By his own power or with the assistance of his fellows, no man can recover it. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," therefore he must be "born not of blood," &c., "but of God." I. GOD HAS MADE PROVISION FOR THE RENEWAL OF HIS IMAGE IN MAN.

1. This provision consists in—(1) The atonement which justifies God's interposition for man's regeneration. If without a sacrifice God had restored man, the idea of misfortune, not guilt, would have been associated with man's fallen state. But now sin appears exceeding sinful. (2) The living Mediator is the way for man to God—as the source of life and light. (3) The testimony of God's Word informs men of the atonement and Mediator. How can they avail themselves of what they have not heard? (4) The Holy Spirit so acts upon the heart as to produce sympathy with the testimony of the gospel; and under His influence men believe God's Word and are born again. 2. There is provision: the recovery of God's image is possible. The aged cannot become young, the diseased healthful, the mutilated whole; but man may be renewed. Nature illustrates this. Trees shed their leaves in autumn, and remain in winter as though dead. In the spring the sap rises and circulates, the branches extend, and the foliage returns. The plumage of the bird loses its vigour and gloss, but moulting recovers strength and restores beauty. The human body, is exhausted through the waste of its functional operations, and for its renewal we have provision in food and sleep. And for the soul there is as real a provision. Let none despair. There is balm in Gilead, &c.

3. This provision is of God. He first thought of making it, not man; and He has carried out this design. (1) The creative power of God is unlimited. "The things which are impossible with men," &c. (2) Power connected with malevolence is a fearful combination, but how changed the aspect of power when the hand and arm of love. What benevolence is here. "Behold what manner of love," &c. This proves—(1) That God is faultless concerning the entrance of evil. (2) That He has no complacency in the evil of men. (3) That he has no pleasure in the death either of holiness or joy. (4) That He delights in mercy. 4. There is but one provision. If men could have restored themselves or each other, God would not have made provision. As you cannot respire by the light, nor see by the air, but *vice versâ*, so you cannot be regenerated by intellectual or social education.

II. MEN ARE, THROUGH THE DIVINE PROVISION, ACTUALLY REGENERATED INTO THE IMAGE OF GOD. 1. Its sphere. (1) Not the body, although regeneration does effect salutary changes here. Where vice has reigned, regeneration arrests disease and restores health. Where passions have been dominant, the countenance is changed. It also affects temporal circumstances by improving habits. (2) The soul is its true seat, and the change consists in the leading forth Godwards of all its powers, and the awakening of all its susceptibilities. (a) A renewed man thinks, and his knowledge is of God and Christ. (b) He feels, and his affections are led away from the unlawful and are fixed on the good. (c) His conscience is rectified and made sensitive, and His will and actions are brought under its control. (d) Over the world he is a conqueror. (e) He is made like Christ, and through Christ like God. 3. Its nature. (1) It is radical and general. It penetrates to the core of the soul,

and spreads itself over the entire surface. The likeness of a statue to its subject is merely on the face of the marble; as you get below you reach the unlike. (2) Its perfection is a work of time. A man is born again so soon as he believes in Christ; but into the likeness of God he grows up. Conclusion: Such changes are effected, and cannot be questioned. John i. 13, James i. 13, and 1 Peter i. 23 hold good to-day everywhere. 1. When the provision of God's mercy for the regeneration of the race is unknown, no such change is observed to take place. 2. When regeneration does take place, the remedial dispensation of the gospel is acknowledged as the means. (S. Martin.) *Religious affections arise from spiritual enlightenment.*—In order to have the love of Divine things, in the exercise of which religion consists, the soul must be spiritually enlightened so as to apprehend them. I. The Scriptures teach that GRACIOUS AFFECTIONS ARISE FROM SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING (1 John iv. 7; Phil. i. 9; Rom. x. 2; Psa. xciii. 3-4; John vi. 45; Luke xi. 52). 1. Affections which arise from external impressions on the imagination are not gracious. 2. The same is true of those which are awakened by texts of Scripture which come to the mind without carrying any instruction in them. When Christ makes the Scriptures a means of the heart burning with gracious affections, it is by opening the Scriptures to men's understandings (Luke xxiv. 32). 3. Affections that have their ground in bodily sensation, freedom of speech in prayer, aptness of thought, and the like, are not derived from spiritual instruction. Hence the affection is not gracious, unless the light in the understanding, which is its origin, be spiritual. There is, therefore, a "spiritual, supernatural understanding of Divine things that is peculiar to the saints, and which those who are not saints know nothing of" (1 Cor. ii. 14; 1 John iii. 6). II. THIS SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT CONSISTS IN "a sense of the heart of the supreme beauty and sweetness of the holiness or moral perfection of Divine things, together with all that discerning and knowledge of the things of religion that depends upon and flows from such a sense." 1. There is thus a difference between speculative knowledge and that which is experimental (Rom. ii. 20; 2 Cor. ii. 14). 2. He is led by the Spirit who is first instructed in his duty, and then powerfully inclined to comply with such Divine instruction. III. SOME CONCLUSIONS. 1. This spiritual sense will enable the soul to determine what actions are right and becoming to Christians more readily than the greatest abilities without it. 2. This sense will be distinguished from forms of enthusiasm and supposed discoveries of truth and communications other than those which the Scriptures have always contained. 3. Satan and evil spirits have power to tempt us through the imagination. We need to guard against vain imaginations. 4. We need to distinguish "between lively imaginations that spring from strong affections, and strong affections that arise from lively imaginations." What is external and natural in its origin cannot be spiritual and gracious. (L. O. Thompson.)

Ver. 11. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew.—Comparing the enumeration here with that in Gal. iii. 28, we mark this difference. In Galatians the abolition of all distinctions is stated in the broadest way by the selection of three typical instances: Religious prerogative, Jew and Greek; social caste, bond and free; natural sex, male and female. Here, on the other hand, the examples are chosen with special reference to the circumstances of the Colossian Church. 1. The Judaism of the Colossian heretics is met by Greek and Jew, and as it manifested itself especially in enforcing circumcision, this is further emphasized by "circumcision nor uncircumcision." 2. Their Gnosticism is met by "Barbarian, Sythian." They laid special stress on intelligence, penetration, gnosis. The apostle offers the full privileges of the gospel to barbarians even of the lowest type. In Rom. i. 14 the division "Greek and Barbarian" is almost synonymous with wise and unwise. 3. Special circumstances connected with an eminent member of the Colossian Church had directed his attention at this moment to the relation of master and slaves. Hence he cannot leave the subject without adding "bond, free," (Bishop Lightfoot.) *The high level.*—I. THE GOSPEL PRODUCES THE NEW MAN. 1. Before man is made anew all influences fail to produce the change. The glories of heaven never move him to praise, the riches of the earth never touch his gratitude. Like a withered tree, which receives no benefit from sunshine or shower, gracious influences made no impression. 2. But thrown into the crucible and mould of the Cross, he comes out a new man. New thoughts crowd the theatre of his mind, new emotions flower in the garden of his soul, new prospects enliven his future, and impelled by new convictions he

builds up a new character. When ignorant become learned and subjects kings, there is less change than when lions become lambs, and God's enemies His friends.

3. The new man is possible to all. You cannot make poets, painters, musicians, soldiers, statesmen of all men, but the gospel can renovate all.

II. THE GOSPEL UNITES MANKIND UNDER ONE HEAD.

1. There were distinctions. (1) The national contrast between Jew and Greek was strong. The boast of race, achievements, culture, &c., created mutual contempt. Those who gloried in Alexander and Socrates were scornfully reminded of David and Solomon. (2) The religious distinction was still sharper. (3) That between high and low was observed with rigour, there being no middle class. **2.** All these distinctions must be sunk and the race come up by another way. (1) All men must humble themselves in the sight of God. The gospel does not propose to readjust these various claims, but to press regeneration on all. Paul once prided himself on his distinctions, but they vanished in view of the great question, "What must I do to be saved?" (2) The gospel leads to an exaltation which leaves the most exalted human stations behind. Stars shine brightly till the sun appears. The barbarian at the foot of the Cross is higher than Cæsar on his throne. He who embraces Christ is rich, while the millionaire who trusts in riches is poor.

III. THE GOSPEL ASSIMILATES HUMAN LIFE TO THAT OF CHRIST.

1. Christ absorbs every other condition which influences the mind. The river which flows over mountain and dale preserves its name and identity all the way to its mouth—then it is lost. So with him whose life-streams flow towards Christ, they will be absorbed in the ocean of His love. We surrender all to the claims of the Cross. **2.** Christ is seen and felt in all the relations of life. Nature, duty, &c., which before were Christless, are now full of Christ.

3. As Christ is all in all and we in Him, therefore all things are ours. (*T. Davies, Ph. D.*) **Christ is all.—Christ is all:**—There are two worlds, the old and the new. These are peopled by two sorts of manhood, the old man, and the new man, concerning whom see verses 9, 10.

I. WHAT THERE IS NOT IN THE NEW. When we come to be renewed after the image of Him that created us, we find an obliteration of—

1. National distinctions: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew." Jesus is **The Man.** In the broadest sense He is neither Jew nor Gentile. Jesus furnishes us with a new patriotism, loyalty, and clanship, which we may safely indulge to the utmost. **2. Ceremonial distinctions:** "There is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision." The separating rite is abolished, and the peculiar privilege of a nation born after the flesh is gone with it. **3. Social distinctions:** "There is neither bond nor free." We are enabled through Divine grace to see that these distinctions are—(1) Transient. (2) Superficial. (3) Of small value. (4) Non-existent in the spiritual realm. What a blessed blending of all men in one body is brought about by our Lord Jesus! Let us all work in the direction of unity.

II. WHAT THERE IS IN THE NEW. "Christ is all and in all."

1. All our culture. In Him we emulate and excel the "Greek." **2.** All our revelation. We glory in Him even as the "Jew" gloried in receiving the oracles of God. **3.** All our ritual. We have no "circumcision." All Scriptural ordinances are of Him. **4.** All our simplicity. **5.** All our natural traditions. He is more to us than the freshest ideas which cross the mind of the "Barbarian." **6.** All our unconquerableness and liberty. The "Scythian" had not such boundless independence as we find in Him. **7.** All as our Master, if we be "bond." Happy servitude of which He is the head! **8.** Our Magna Charta: yea, our liberty itself if we be "free." Conclusion: "Christ all and in all" furnishes a test question for us. **1.** Is Christ so great with us that He is our all? **2.** Is Christ so broadly and fully with us that He is all in our all? **3.** Is He, then, all in our trust, our hope, our assurance, our joy, our aim, our strength, our wisdom—in a word, "all in all"? **4.** If so, are we living in all for Him? **5.** Are we doing all for Him, because He is all to us? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

But Christ is all in all:—Here in the text Christ is said to be all; but in what sense is Christ all? **1.** Christ is all by way of eminency; all good things are eminently to be found in Him, as the sun doth virtually contain in it the light of the lesser stars. **2.** Christ is all, by way of derivation; all good things are transmitted and conveyed to us through Christ; as your rich commodities, jewels, and spices come by sea, so all heavenly blessings sail to us through the red sea of Christ's blood; "through Him and to Him are all things." Christ is that spiritual pipe, through which the golden oil of mercy empties itself into the soul. Christ must needs be all, for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead." He hath a partnership with God the Father; "all things that the Father hath are Mine;" so that there is enough in Him to scatter all our fears, to remove all our burdens,

to supply all our wants; there can be no defect in that which is infinite. It shows us the glorious fulness of Jesus Christ; "He is all in all." Christ is a pantry, a magazine and storehouse of all spiritual riches: you may go with the bee from flower to flower, and suck here and there a little sweetness, but you will never have enough till you come to Christ, for He is "all in all." Now, in particular, Christ is in all six respects: 1. Christ is all in regard of righteousness—"He is made to us righteousness." 2. Christ is all in regard of sanctification—"He is made to us sanctification." This doth tune and prepare the soul for heaven; it turns iron into gold; it makes the heart which was Satan's picture, Christ's epistle. There must be first our days of purification before our days of glorification. What a blessed work is this! A soul beautified and adorned with grace, is like the firmament bespangled with glittering stars. But whence is this? Christ is all; He is made to us sanctification; He it is that sends His Spirit into our hearts to be a refiner's fire, to burn up our dross, and make our graces sparkle like gold in the furnace; Christ ariseth upon the soul "with healing in His wings." 3. Christ is all in regard of Divine acceptance. As Joseph did present his brethren before Pharaoh, and brought them into favour with the king, so the Lord Jesus carries the name of the saints upon His breast, and presents them before His Father, so bringing them into repute and honour. Through the red glass everything appears of a red colour; through the blood of Christ we look of a sanguine complexion, ruddy and beautiful in God's eyes. 4. Christ is all in regard of Divine assistance; a Christian's strength lies in Christ. Whence is it a Christian is able to do duty, to resist temptation, but through Christ's strengthening? 5. Christ is all in regard of pacification; when conscience is in an agony, and burns as hell in the sense of God's wrath; now Christ is all, He pours the palm of His blood into these wounds, He maketh the storm a calm. Christ doth not only make peace in the court of heaven, but in the court of conscience; He not only makes peace above us, but within us. 6. Christ is all in regard of remuneration; He it is that crowns us after all our labours and sufferings. If Christ be all, it shows what a vast disproportion there is between Christ and the creature; there is as much difference as between *ens* and *nihil* ; Christ is all in all, and the creature is nothing at all: "wilt thou set thine eyes on that which is not?" In all our spiritual wants we should repair to Christ as Jacob's sons did to their brother Joseph. He opened all the store-houses, and "gave to his brethren corn and provision for the way." Thus the Lord hath made Christ our Joseph; "in whom are hid all treasures." If Christ be all, see here the Christian's inventory, how rich is he that hath Christ! he hath all that may make him completely happy. Plutarch reports that the wife of Phocion being asked where her jewels were, she answered, "My husband, and his triumphs are my jewels!" so, if a Christian be asked, where are his riches, he will say, "Christ is my riches." How could a Christian sit down satisfied with Christ! "Christ is all." What though he wants other things, is not Christ enough? If a man hath sun-bine, he doth not complain he wants the light of a candle. Thou hast Christ with all His perquisites and royalties! Suppose a father should deny his son furniture for his house, but should settle all his land upon him, had he any cause to complain? If God denies thee a little furniture in the world, but in the meantime settles His land upon thee, He gives thee the field wherein the pearl of price is hid, hast thou any cause to repine? A Christian that wants necessities, yet having Christ, he hath the one thing needful; "ye are complete in Him." What! complete in Christ, and not content with Christ? If Christ be all, see the deplorable condition of a Christless person; he is poor, he is worth nothing; "thou art wretched, miserable, and poor," &c. The sadness of a man that wants Christ will appear in these seven particulars. 1. He hath no justification. 2. He that wants Christ, wants the beauty of holiness; Jesus Christ is a living spring of grace; "full of grace and truth." 3. He that wants Christ, wants His freedom; "if the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed." 4. He that wants Christ, hath no ability for service. 5. He that wants Christ, hath no consolation; Christ is called "the consolation of Israel." A Christless soul is a comfortless soul. 6. He that wants Christ, hath no salvation. 1. If Christ be all, then set a high valuation upon Jesus Christ; "to you which believe, He is precious." 2. If Jesus Christ be all, then make sure of Christ; never leave trading in ordinances, till you have gotten this pearl of price. In Christ there is the accumulation of all good things. And that I may persuade all to get Christ, let me show what an enriching blessing Christ is. 1. Christ is a supreme good; put what you will in the balance with Christ, He doth infinitely outweigh. Is life sweet? Christ is better: He is the life of the soul; "His loving-kindness is better than life."

2. Christ is a sufficient good ; He who hath Christ, needs no more ; he who hath the ocean, needs not the cistern. 3. Christ is a sanctifying good, He makes every condition happy to us, He sweetens all our comforts, and sanctifies all our crosses. 4. Christ is a select, choice good. God shows more love in giving us Christ, than in giving us crowns and kingdoms. 5. Christ is such a good, as without which nothing is good, without Christ health is not good, it is fuel for lust ; riches are not good, they are golden snares ; ordinances are not good, though they are good in themselves, yet not good to us. 6. Christ is an enduring good ; other things are like the lamp, which while it shines it spends, the heavens "shall wax old like a garment." 7. Christ is a diffusive, communicative good ; He is full, not only as a vessel, but as a spring, He is willing to give Himself to us. But how shall I get a part in Christ ? 1. See your need of Christ, know that you are undone without Him. 2. Be importunate after Christ. "Lord, give me Christ, or I die!" 3. Be content to have Christ, as Christ is offered, a Prince and a Saviour. 1. Make Christ all in your understanding, be ambitious to know nothing but Christ. What is it to have knowledge in physic—to be able with Esculapius and Galen to discourse of the causes and symptoms of a disease, and what is proper to apply, and in the meantime to be ignorant of the healing under Christ's wings ? What is it to have knowledge in astronomy—to discourse of the stars and planets, and to be ignorant of Christ, that bright morning-star which leads to heaven ? We cannot know God but through Christ. 2. Make Christ all in your affections. Love nothing but Christ ; love is the choicest affection, it is the richest jewel the creature hath to bestow ; O if Christ be all, love Him better than all ! 3. Make Christ all in your abilities, do all in His strength, "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." When you are to resist a temptation, to mortify a corruption, do not go out in your own strength, but in the strength of Christ : "be strong in the Lord." 4. Make Christ all in your aims ; do all to His glory. 5. Make Christ all in your affiance ; trust to none but Christ for salvation ; the Papists make Christ something, but not all. 6. Make Christ all in your joy. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." When a Christian sees a deficiency in himself, he may see an all-sufficiency in his Saviour : "happy is that people whose God is the Lord ! " That servant needs not want who hath his master's full purse at command : he needs not want who hath Christ, for "Christ is all and in all." (T. Watson.) *Christ is all* :—The doctrine of the text—I. ACCOUNTS FOR THE ESSENTIAL SIMILARITY OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. Innumerable are the causes of diversity—constitutional peculiarities, external circumstances, accidental associations. But amidst all these, whether men are slaves or freemen, rude or civilized, &c., the Christian principle equalizes all, as forming a common centre, a standard under which all are enlisted, the source of their felicity, the rejoicing of their hearts. Christ is all in all. 1. To those who believe in Him. 2. In all the felicities of an eternal life. II. ILLUSTRATES THE TRUE UNITY OF THE CHURCH. To produce unity uniformity has been attempted, but this is different from oneness of spirit. No visible accordance by subscribing to formularies or uniting in observances can realize unity. There will be a period when this will be realized ; but amidst all that separates, amidst all that enemies and friends have done to injure the cause, there is a real and effective unity between Christians. Bring believers of every age, class, name together, and one chord will vibrate in every heart, one topic be the theme of every song, one principle the life of all. They are all in Christ and therefore one : one in relationship, sympathy, joy, sorrow, hope. III. PROVES THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION. This is the religion of man ; adapted to him wherever you find him, whether scorched by Indian suns or blanched by northern snows. All men are lost ; Christianity comes to save all men. The religion of Christ, unlike any other, has nothing local or restrictive. There are no circumstantials in it to narrow its range. This universality—1. Is founded on the condition of man in all circumstances. 2. Is proved by its actual results wherever received. 3. Is provided for by the security of the everlasting covenant. 4. Is guaranteed to the Church by the presence of Christ. IV. CONSTITUTES THE GREAT SUBJECT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, AND ASSIGNS THE TRUE CAUSE OF ITS EFFICIENCY. "I if I be lifted up," &c. V. EXHIBITS AN ADEQUATE SOURCE OF CONSOLATION AND SUPPORT IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH AND ETERNITY. 1. It secures a victory over the king of terrors. 2. It ensures an abundant entrance into heaven. (J. Fletcher, D.D.) *Christ is all* :—These three words are the essence of Christianity. If our hearts really go along with them it is well. If not we have much to learn. Christ is all. I. IN ALL THE COUNSELS

OF GOD CONCERNING MAN. 1. There was a time when this earth had no being, where was Christ then? (John i. 1; Phil. ii. 6; John xvii. 5, 24; Prov. vii. 23). 2. There came a time when this earth was created in its present order. Where was Christ then? (John i. 3; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 10; Prov. viii. 27-30). 3. There came a day when sin entered the world. Where was Christ then? (Gen. iii. 15). 4. There came a time when the world seemed buried in ignorance of God. For 4,000 years the nations of the earth appeared to have clean forgotten the God that made them (1 Cor. i. 21). What did Christ do then? Left His eternal glory and came down to provide a salvation. 5. There is a time coming when sin shall be cast out from this world (Rom. viii. 22; Acts iii. 21; 2 Pet. iii. 13; Isa. xi. 9). Where shall Christ be then? And what shall He do? (Matt. xxiv. 30; Rev. xi. 15; Ps. ii. 8; Phil. ii. 10-11; Dan. vii. 14). 6. There is a day coming when all men shall be judged. Where will Christ be then? (John v. 22; Matt. xxv. 32; 2 Cor. v. 10). Now, if any think little of Christ, he is very unlike God. He is of one mind and God of another. In all the eternal counsels of God the Father, in creation, redemption, restitution, and judgment Christ is all (John v. 23). II. IN THE INSPIRED BOOKS WHICH MAKE UP THE BIBLE. 1. It was Christ crucified who was set forth in every Old Testament sacrifice (1 Pet. iii. 18). 2. It was Christ to whom Abel looked when he offered a better sacrifice than Cain (Heb. xi. 4). 3. It was Christ of whom Enoch prophesied in the days of abounding wickedness before the flood (Jude 15). 4. It was Christ to whom Abraham looked when he dwelt in tents in the land of promise (John viii. 56). 5. It was Christ of whom Jacob spoke to his sons, as he lay dying (Gen. xlix. 10). 6. It was Christ who was the subject of the ceremonial law. The sacrifices, altar, priesthood, &c., were emblems of Christ and His work (Gal. iii. 24). 7. It was Christ to whom God directed the attention of Israel by all the miracles of the wilderness (1 Cor. x. 4; John iii. 14). 8. It was Christ of whom the Judges were types. 9. It was Christ of whom David was a type. 10. It was Christ of whom all the prophets from Isaiah to Malachi spoke (1 Pet. i. 11). 11. It is Christ of whom the whole New Testament is full. The Gospels are Christ living among men; the Epistles are Christ explained and exalted; the Acts are Christ proclaimed. What is the Bible to you? A book of good moral precepts, or one in which "Christ is all and in all"? If not the latter you have used it to little purpose. You are like a man who studies the solar system and leaves out the sun. III. IN THE RELIGION OF ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS. Christ is all—1. In a sinner's justification before God (Eph. i. 12; Rom. iii. 26). Wherewith shall man come before God? Shall we say we have done our duty, and bring forward prayers, morality, church-going? Which of these will stand God's searching inspection? None. We must come through Jesus. (1) His righteousness is the only robe which can cover us. (2) His name our only shibboleth at the gate of heaven. (3) His blood the only mark that can save us from destruction. 2. In a Christian's sanctification. (1) No man is holy till he is united to Christ (John xv. 5). (2) None grows in holiness except he abide in Christ (Col. ii. 6-7). 3. In a Christian's comfort in time present. A saved soul has many sorrows and trials, which were unbearable but for Christ (Phil. ii. 1). Jesus is a brother born for adversity (Heb. iv. 15). We talk of the preciousness of sympathy, but there is none like that of Christ (Psa. xciv. 19; cxiv. 5). In Him alone there is no failure. Rich men are disappointed in their wealth, learned men in their books, husbands in their wives, &c., statesmen in their places; but none was ever disappointed in Christ. 4. In a Christian's hopes for time to come. He has a good hope, the worldly man has none. It is a blessed hope (Titus ii. 13; Psa. lxxii. 5). IV. IN HEAVEN. 1. Like the altar in Solomon's temple Christ will be the grand object in heaven (Rev. v. 6; xxi. 23). 2. His praise will be our eternal song (Rev. v. 12-13). 3. His service will be our one occupation (Rev. vii. 15). 4. His presence will be our one everlasting enjoyment (Rev. xxii. 4; Psa. xvii. 15). All this being the case, then Christ ought to be all in all. V. IN THE VISIBLE CHURCH. Splendid buildings, gorgeous ceremonies, troops of ordained men are nothing in the sight of God if Christ be not magnified. VI. IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. Its one work is to lift up Christ. Conclusion: Learn—1. The utter uselessness of a Christless religion. 2. The enormous folly of joining anything with Christ in the matter of salvation. 3. If you want to be saved to apply direct to Christ. 4. If you be Christians deal with Him as if you really believed this; trust Him far more than you have ever done. (*Bishop Ryle.*) *Christ is all*:—I. BY WHOM THE TRUTH IS RECOGNIZED. 1. There are many to whom Christ is nothing; He scarcely enters into their thoughts. 2. There are others to whom Christ is something but

not much. They are anxious to save themselves, and use the merits of Christ as a sort of makeweight to their own slight deficiencies. 3. Others think Him to be much but not all, and so want to feel more, repent more, before they accept Him. 4. Some regard Christ as all in some things, in justification, *e.g.*, but not sanctification, whereas it is said that He is "made unto us wisdom," &c. There is no point between the gates of hell and the gates of heaven where a believer has to say, Christ fails me here and I must rely on my own endeavours. 5. This is a truth which every believer recognizes, and on which the Church, in spite of its divisions, is one. The man who cannot say this is no Christian, the man who can is. II. WHAT THIS TRUTH INCLUDES. 1. Christ is all by way of (1) National distinction. As a man I may rejoice that I am an Englishman, but not with the same joy as that I am a Christian. A Christian foreigner is more allied to me than a godless Briton. (2) Subject for glorying. The Greek said, "We are a nation of heroes, remember Sparta"; but when he joined the Church he boasted of a nobler victory through the Cross. So the Jew laid aside his national traditions; the Scythian spoke the language of Canaan as correctly as his Greek brother; the slave was no longer a slave when he breathed the air of a Christian Church. (3) Sinful national customs. Each asked no more, What did my ancestors do? but what does Christ bid me do? 2. Christ is all to us—(1) Godwards. We need a Mediator; Christ is that. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (2) Before our enemies. Satan, and the world with all its vicissitudes. (3) Within ourselves. If we look into our inner nature we see all manner of deficiencies; but when we see Christ there we know that He will destroy the works of the devil and perfect that which He has begun in us. 3. Christ is all. (1) For us. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He made Him to be sin for us," &c. (2) To us. We have no other hope but in His righteousness. (3) In us. Whatever there is in us that is not of Christ will have to come out. Christ on the cross saved us by becoming Christ in the heart. 4. Shift the kaleidoscope; Christ is all. (1) The channel of all. All the love and mercy of God flow through Him. Other conduits are dry, but this is always full. (2) The pledge of all. "He that spared not His own son," &c. (3) The sum of all. When we travel we need only to take money which answereth all things. So Christ has the substance of all good. 5. Christ is all (1) we desire; (2) can conceive. III. WHAT THIS TRUTH INVOLVES. 1. The excellence of Christ. Of whom else could this be said? There are many good things in this world, but nothing that is good for everything. Some plants may be good medicine but not good cordial; but the plant of renown is good every way. Good clothing is not able to stay your hunger, but Christ is the bread of heaven and the best robe. 2. The safety and blessedness of the believer. Christ is all that he will as well as does want; but we are devoid of all when destitute of Christ. 3. A rebuke for the doubts of many seekers. "I have not this or that," but Christ has it if it be good for anything. 4. A rebuke for the coldness of saints. If Christ be all, how is it we prize and love Him so little? 5. A means of measuring young converts. We ought not to expect them to be philosophers or divines. Is Christ all in all to them? If so, welcome them. 6. A measure for ministers. Is Christ all in their preaching? 7. A help to estimate our devotions. IV. WHAT THIS TRUTH REQUIRES—the exhibition of a Christ-like life. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ all in all*:—Christianity is simply Christ. Without His person there is nothing left that is distinctively Christian. Other religions may be separated from their founders; and we may take any feature away without destroying its force. But separate any truth of Christianity from Christ and it has lost its peculiar character. Christ is the all in all—I. OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Even sceptics admit the extraordinary reformatory effect of Christianity. This is not due to any new truth of morals Christ gave to the world. His system is original in the new form and power given to truth. It would be absurd to deny the claim of an inventor to originality, simply because the materials of his machine were known before. But the peculiar power which has made Christian morality so effective is the living person of Jesus. Embodied in Him the truth is seen and felt and loved as never before. We first love Him and then we love the purity, charity, &c., which make Him "the altogether lovely," and enthusiasm for these follows. When the sun has set, the mountains, plains, and rivers may be still visible, but their glory has gone. When the person of Jesus is removed from His moral system, its precepts and maxims are there still, but their charm has gone. II. OF CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPY. There is no such self-sacrifice and devotion as in Christianity. Witness the history of missionary and

charitable effort. Its secret inspiration is "The love of Christ constraineth us," There are other motives, and Christians feel them as much as non-Christians—the beauty of self-sacrifice, the fine sentiment of humanity, the grandeur of heroic effort. But the grand inspiration is as Paul puts it. A child will work wonders under the approving eye of father or mother. A soldier will fight marvellously under the eye of his captain. A Highland chief fell; and his clan thinking him slain began to waver, but raising himself on his elbow he called, "My children, I am not dead, I am looking at you." That turned defeat into victory. At the battle of Ivry Henry IV. said, "My children, when you lose sight of your colours rally to my white plume. You will always find it in the way to glory." So when every other motive fails; when the flags of humanity, sentiment, duty have gone down, the Christian rallies round the Captain of his salvation. III. OF CHRISTIAN CONSOLATION. It is not in any new philosophy of suffering, or philosophical way of looking at it, that the Christian finds that peace which the world knows not nor can give. Take to an afflicted Christian even Paul's "These light afflictions," &c., and you elicit no peculiar response. But speak to him of the personal love and sympathy of Jesus; say, "In all thy affliction He is afflicted"; point out to him in the dark valley he is treading the bloody foot-prints of his Redeemer; show him in the furnace "one like unto the Son of Man," and mark the different effect.

IV. OF THE CHRISTIAN PLAN OF SALVATION. Conclusion: Learn—1. The folly of that cant about retaining all that is essential in Christianity without the person of Christ. 2. That to be a Christian is to be in personal communion with Christ. (*S. P. Sprecher, D.D.*) *Christ all in all*:—I. FOR THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE CHURCH. He is the Lord our Righteousness. "He hath made Him to be sin for us," &c. II. IN A SINNER'S ACCEPTANCE BEFORE GOD. "No man cometh to the Father but by Me." III. FOR THE SANCTIFICATION OF BELIEVERS. "Made unto us . . . sanctification." IV. FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF A SAINT'S WEAKNESS. "Present help in time of trouble." "My grace is sufficient for thee." V. FOR THE TRANQUILITY OF THE CHRISTIAN'S SOUL. "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "The peace of God which passeth all understanding," &c. VI. IN THE GRACIOUS REWARDS OFFERED TO HIS DISCIPLES. "Father, I will that . . . they be with Me." Inferences: 1. How great the difference between Christ as our portion, and all those sources of comfort which earth can afford. The one is "the fountain of living waters," the other "broken cisterns." All are yours if ye are Christ's. 2. The believer should glory in none but Him. 3. How deplorable the condition of those who have no interest in Him. 4. Let us make Him all in all to ourselves. (1) In our understandings; (2) affections; (3) ability; (4) every aim and action. (*R. P. Buddicom, M.A.*) *The Lord Jesus Christ all in all*:—1. There are some persons who have no essentials in their creed, and others no circumstantialities. (1) Some seem perfectly regardless of doctrinal principles; it is nothing to them whether they address the Supreme Being as "Jehovah, Jove and Lord," whether Christ is Divine or merely human, and whether His sacrifice is an atonement or an example. (2) Others regard everything as equally important, and lay as much stress upon discipline as on doctrine, on the mode of administering an ordinance as upon the ordinance itself, and plead as much for "mint, anise," &c., as for the weightier matters of the law. (3) While one of these parties has no room for faith, the other has no room for charity. Both extremes are to be avoided. 2. Surely there are differences between things, between speculative opinion and a practical truth, the ornament of a bridge and the key-stone of an arch, a man maimed and a man dead. The Scriptures, therefore, diminish the value of inferior things in religion, and magnify the importance of the superior ones. Hence, it everywhere shows that Christ is all in all. This is so—1. IN THE OPERATIONS OF DIVINE GRACE. 1. Redemption. "Ye are bought with a price," and this price is "the precious blood of Christ." 2. Justification. "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." Men talk of making their peace with God. That is made "by the blood of Christ's cross"; all that is required is to accept it. 3. Renovation. We are "new creatures in Christ Jesus." 4. Perseverance. The righteous hold on their way not by their own resolutions and efforts, but because He is able to save to the uttermost. We are "more than conquerors through Him." 5. Glorification. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear," &c. II. IN THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE. The Bible is a revelation of Christ, and is therefore called "the Word of Christ." Christ is all in all. 1. In the historical part. In Adam you see him as the head and representative of his people; in Noah, as the restorer of the new world; in Isaac, as a burnt offering; in Joseph, as humbled and

exalted, and the saviour of his father's house; in Aaron, as a high priest; in Moses, as a lawgiver; in Joshua, as the leader and commander of the people; in Solomon, as the Prince of Peace; in Jonah, rising again the third day. 2. In the Levitical part, which was a shadow of which He is the body. Everything in this dispensation reminds us of Christ: the smitten rock, of His refreshment; the manna, of the Bread of Life; the mercy seat, of His propitiation; the pass-over, of His blood sprinkled on the conscience securing us from the avenger; the sacrifices, of His atonement. 3. In the prophetic part. "To Him gave all the prophets witness." "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." 4. The promissory part. The promises are only "exceeding great and precious," as they are "Yea and Amen in Him." 5. The evangelical part. 6. The epistolary part.

III. IN THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY. 1. In its institution. When He ascended on high He gave gifts to men, and gave some apostles, &c., "for the work of the ministry." 2. In its commission. "Go ye into all the world." 3. In its qualification. He only can make men "able ministers of the New Testament." 4. In its successes. He confirms the word by signs following. 5. In its theme. "God forbid that I should glory," &c. All other themes radiate from or converge in Him—God, providence, heaven.

IV. IN THE ESTIMATION OF HIS PEOPLE. 1. This applies to Abraham, who "rejoiced to see his day"; to Moses, who esteemed His "reproach greater riches than the treasures of Egypt"; to Job, who knew that his Redeemer lived; to David, to whom He was "fairer than the children of men"; to the Church, in whose sight He is "altogether lovely"; to Simeon, who saw in Him God's salvation; to Paul, who esteemed all things loss for the excellency of His knowledge; to the first Christians, who exclaimed, "Whom not having seen we love"; to the noble army of martyrs, who said, "We cannot dispute for Him, but we can burn for Him." 2. This applies to His own people now, for He is all in all in their thoughts, desires, experience, actions. (*W. Jay.*) *Christ is a Christian's all*:—1. By a Christian is meant: (1) Negatively: not those who have nothing more to declare them such than their baptism and professions (Rev. iii. 1). We account them monsters who have faces of men and limbs of beasts, and they are religious monsters who have the faces of Christians and the lives of pagans. (2) Positively: those who are Israelites indeed. 2. To such Christ is all (1 Cor. i. 30). We are foolish, but Christ is our "wisdom"; we are guilty, but He is our "righteousness"; we are polluted, but He is our "sanctification"; we are lost and undone, but He is our "redemption"; we are empty, He is a full fountain; we are necessitous and indigent, in Him dwells all fulness of everything (Col. i. 19; ii. 3, 9, 10). The rich merchant was none the poorer for parting with all for the pearl of great price (Matt. iii. 45-46). 3. When ever so much is said, there cannot be a greater word than "all." The Greeks deemed it an excellency to speak much in few words; "an ocean of matter in a drop of words." The apostle gives us here gold in the wedge, which we are to beat out. The two names given by the ancient philosophers to God were "The Being," and "The All." These the apostle gives to Christ. Physicians speak of an universal medicine, but Jesus is a true panacea. There are thousands of cases in which no other can help, but not one in which Christ cannot help fully.

I. WHEREIN CHRIST IS ALL. 1. To all Christians, to free them from whatever might hinder their salvation. (1) Sin. This he does (a) by expiating its guilt, and so removing the wrath of God (Eph. v. 6; Rom. viii. 1). This neither legal sacrifices nor good works could do; but Christ not only frees us from condemnation but confers the adoption of children (Rom. viii. 14-16). (b) By cleansing its pollution (Zech. xiii. 1), and restoring us to purity (Isa. i. 18). (c) By conquering its tyranny, and reigning Himself where it once held sway. (d) By redeeming us from its bondage, and giving us the glorious liberty of the children of God. (2) The oppositions of Satan, his wiles and subtleties. These are of great importance, as our first parents knew; and we, though redeemed, are not exempt from them (2 Cor. xi. 3). But Christ hath spoiled him (Col. ii. 15), and led captivity captive (Eph. iv. 8). Christ is all, and in that we may rely for resisting power. (3) The disturbances, allurements, discouragements, smiles and frowns of a profane world. Be of good cheer, Christ hath overcome it: live by faith in Him who is your all, and you will overcome. 2. To fill the souls of believers with all that good which may capacitate them for happiness. The experience of grace is essential for the enjoyment of glory. Heaven must be brought down into our souls, before we can ascend thither (Col. i. 12; Eph. v. 5). We are by nature unmeet, and could we enter heaven in a state of nature, it would not be heaven for us (Rom. viii. 6, 7), because all delight arises from the suitableness of object to

subject. Now Christ is all in this respect (John i. 16, x. 10; Eph. v. 8, ii. 5-10). 3. To fill all ordinances with power. These are means of salvation, and through His concurrence effectual means. Yet they are but empty pipes unless Christ is pleased to fill them, who "filleteth all in all" (Eph. i. 23). It is He who baptizes with the Holy Ghost; and in the preaching of the Word speaks to the heart (Luke xxiv. 32). While the disciples fished alone they caught nothing; but when Christ came they caught multitudes (John xxi. 3-6). 4. To fill every condition with comfort. The best condition is not good without Him, nor the worst bad with Him (Psa. lxxxiv. 10; lxxiii. 25; lxxiii. 3). The sense of Christ's love enabled Paul to overcome all adversaries (Rom. viii. 38, 39). 5. To furnish us with strength to persevere. The way to heaven is no smooth and easy way (Matt. vii. 14; Acts xiv. 22); and inasmuch as the crown is reserved for the head of perseverance (Rev. ii. 10), we require a strength greater than our own (Rom. vii. 24). In ourselves we can do nothing (John xv. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 5), but in Him who is our all, we can do all things (Phil. iv. 13). Thus the Christian is complete in Christ (Col. ii. 10).

II. **How is CHRIST OUR ALL?** 1. Negatively: not so as to excuse us from all endeavours. Christ's sufficiency does not excuse, but engage our industry (Phil. ii. 12-13). It is God who does all; therefore, do all you can. 2. Positively: (1) By way of impetration, inasmuch as our salvation was His purchase. Whence is it that they who have brought themselves under the deserts of hell, may have the hopes, means, and first fruits of heaven? All are the price of Christ's blood (Eph. v. 25-27; Acts xx. 28; John xv. 13). It was by His own blood that He entered heaven, and opened the door for all who are incorporated into Him (Heb. ix. 12; x. 19, 20). (2) By way of application, inasmuch as He brings home the blessings He has purchased into the soul of His people. He has not only purchased salvation for them, but them for it: not only the possibility of heaven, but the proprietorship, and this is necessary to every comfort. What are the treasures of the Indies to him who only hears of them? Mere stories. What are the glories of heaven to him deprived of the enjoyment of them? Mere torments. But we enjoy all in Christ. What the root is to the tree, the vine to the branches, the head to the body, all this is Christ to believers (Col. ii. 7; John xv. 1, 5; Eph. i. 22-23), viz., not only a treasury of all good, but a fountain continually streaming down blessings into our souls.

III. **WHAT ADVANTAGE IS IT TO HAVE OUR ALL IN CHRIST.** 1. Because our salvation can be in no hands so safe as Christ's. Had it been in ours, alas for us; but in His who is able to save to the utmost it is secure. Hence, as we can have no other Saviour beside Him, we cannot have any other like Him (Acts iv. 12). 2. Because our salvation could have been in no way so comfortable. As God has the glory of every attribute, so Christians have the comfort of every attribute in this way of salvation. Application: 1. If Christ be all, then there is no ground for despondency, either from your own deficiencies or those of creature helps. You need nothing since Christ is your all. (1) You have the sum of all. Though you have not estates, friends, worldly comforts, you have Christ, who more than makes up for the want of them. The cistern may well be dispensed with by him who lives at the fountain; and the light of a candle by him who enjoys the sun (2 Cor. vi. 10). (2) You have the pledge of all (Rom. viii. 32). 2. What cause have we to be thankful for Christ (Gen. xxxii. 10; Eph. i. 3). 3. How great is their folly and misery who keep at a distance from Christ (John v. 40; Eph. ii. 12). 4. That Christ may be all in all to you. (1) Labour to get your judgments settled in the belief that all things in the world are nothing without Christ. (2) Cast out all inmates which, because they are unmeet companions for Christ, may hinder His taking possession of your souls. The ark and Dagon could not stand together in the same room (Amos iii. 3). (3) Accept Christ on His own terms. (4) Measure all things by their reference to Christ. (5) Be serious in resolving this great question—Whether Christ who is all to sincere Christians is all to you. (a) Are you conformable unto Christ (Rom. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 17; 2 Cor. v. 17). (b) Are you all to Him in your affections (Psa. lxxiii. 3; lxxiii. 5; Heb. xi. 26; Matt. x. 37); in your acknowledgements (1 Cor. xv. 10; Eph. v. 20); in your contentment and satisfaction (Heb. iii. 17-18); in your dependencies and expectations; in your designs and aims (Phil. i. 20). (*W. Whitaker, A.M.*) *Christ everything to the Christian*:—The happiness we derive from creatures is like a beggar's garment; it is made up of pieces and patches, and is worth very little after all. But the blessedness we derive from the Saviour is simple and complete. In Him all fulness dwells. He is coeval with every period. He is answerable to every condition. He is a Physician to heal, a

Counsellor to advise, a King to govern, a Friend to sympathise, a Father to provide. He is a Foundation to sustain, a Root to enliven, a Fountain to refresh. He is the Shadow from the heat, the Bread of Life, the Morning Star, the Sun of Righteousness—all and in all. No creature can be a substitute for Him, but He can supply the place of every creature. (*W. Jay.*) *Christ all in all in death*:—Foster Rutherford when dying said, "He has indeed been a precious Christ to me; and now I feel Him to be my rock, my strength, my rest, my hope, my joy, my all in all." Robert Newton said, "Christ Jesus the Saviour of sinners and life of the dead. I am going, going, going, to glory! Farewell, sin! farewell, death! Praise the Lord!"

Vers. 12-15. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved.—*The essentials of a Christian character*:—The Christian character is distinguished by—**I. A SPECIAL DESIGNATION**, signifying—1. Divine choice—"Elect." 2. Personal purity—"Holy." The evidence and practical result of election (Eph. i. 4). 3. Divine affection—"Beloved." Each of these epithets has the force of a motive. **II. A HEARTFELT SYMPATHY**. Arising from—1. A spirit of tender mercy—"Bowels of mercy"—a phrase expressing the effect on the body of strong emotions of pity. A genuine pity is not only visible on the countenance, and uttered by the lips, but is felt in the inmost heart, and prompts to generous actions. 2. A spirit of kindness. **III. A GENUINE HUMILITY**. 1. This is not undue self-depreciation, but a proper estimate of self. 2. It proceeds from exalted views of God. 3. It is fruitful, as that branch in the garden which is most heavily laden with fruit is nearest the ground. **IV. A GENTLE AND PATIENT SPIRIT**. 1. "Meekness" (Judges viii. 2), which is slow to take and scorns to give offence. 2. "Longsuffering," meekness continued, though subjected to the strongest provocations. **V. A PRACTICAL MANIFESTATION OF A SPIRIT OF MUTUAL FORBEARANCE AND FORGIVENESS**. 1. This is to be exercised universally—"Any." Quarrel would be better rendered complaint. It takes two to make a quarrel; the Christian should never be one. 2. It is enforced by the highest example—"Even as Christ." The heart that is not moved by this is incorrigible. Lessons—1. The unity of Christian character is made up of many separate essential graces. 2. The condition of things in this world affords ample scope for the exercise of every Christian grace. 3. To forgive is at once the most difficult and most Christlike. (*W. Barlow.*) *The costume of a saint*:—1. Clothing is the external badge of individuality. Without clothing, or with an absolute uniformity of clothing, it would scarcely be possible for one man to be known from another. And much of the character comes out in one's dress. The vain, the proud, the miserly, the profligate, the orderly, or the reckless man, may often be quickly distinguished by his dress. So a man's disposition is the dress of his soul. You know the tone of spirit which distinguishes him from another, and you are struck with it as soon as you are in his company. The word "habit" may be applied either to the material or to the immaterial parts and adjuncts of the human being, and it is a connecting link between the dress of the body and the disposition of the soul. 2. There are distinctive costumes peculiar to certain classes or communities. There are national costumes, by which an Englishman is known from a Turk, a German from a Spaniard, &c. There are costumes of the sexes, and of various ages. There are costumes of professions and trades, as the soldier's, the sailor's, the king's, the judge's, &c. Thus also there are characteristic phases of mind which belong to special classes. 3. Let us apply these things to Christians. With due allowance for individual idiosyncrasies, there is yet a certain tone and temper of mind which should belong to every child of God. It should be to him as a suit of clothes, at once significant of his character and citizenship, and also contributing to his comfort and comeliness. The parts of this suit are here carefully enumerated, and you will see how admirably they correspond with one another. **I. THE COSTUME OF A SAINT AS HERE DESCRIBED**. 1. "Bowels of mercies," a yearning and tender sympathy with the sorrowful and afflicted: as opposed to carelessness or cruel delight in their griefs. 2. "Kindness," active goodwill, not merely ready to sympathize with suffering, but in every way to do good to others. It is simple, pure, brotherly, and disinterested. 3. "Humbleness of mind" has two phases. It is a low estimate of ourselves, and it leads us highly to estimate others in comparison with ourselves. 4. "Meekness" is a spirit of patience and self-control under reproach, misrepresentation, and unkind treatment by others. 5. "Long-suffering" elongates meekness, and stretches it out, if unkindness from others should be systematic and

long continued. 6. "Forbearing one another," in case of little hitches and provocations. 7. "Forgiving one another," in case of actual injury to character or estate. 8. "Over all these put on charity." This is like a girdle round the loins, or like an easy-fitting toga, or cloak, which is at once elegant and useful. It completes our spiritual dress, and adds a general grace to the entire outfit. Further, all this is not to be merely "put on." There is a radical cause which should produce it all. This lies deep in the heart; and without it, the rest would be a cloak of hypocrisy. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." It is the peace of God in Christ Jesus. Where this is in the heart, the outward clothing will have an inward root. It will be like the natural and vital clothing of the autumn trees, and not like the artificial attire of the human body: the outward and the inward will correspond. We shall put on externally, by putting out or developing from within, all the graces here sketched. II. THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THIS ATTIRE. 1. Consider your position as God's elect—holy and beloved. God's election of you has exemplified in Him all these graces, therefore it is right that you should exhibit them as well. Besides, you are called to be like Him, and such as He can admire; therefore, conform to His character in these particulars. 2. Consider especially His grace in forgiving your sins. How great that boon! It is a small thing to ask you to do the same for others. 3. Your vocation as a Christian Church demands the exercise of these virtues. You are called to be one compact and corporate body in the Lord. There should be no schism, no lack of mutual sympathy and interest among you. On the contrary, there should be the utmost gentleness, kindness, patience, &c. This is the dress which God requires you to wear. Do you possess it? Seek it more fully now: renew it continually, and so walk, worthy of the high vocation wherewith ye are called, and be thankful. (T. G. Horton.) *The garments of the renewed soul*:—Because the new nature has been assumed, therefore array your souls in vesture corresponding; because Christ is all in all clothe yourselves with all brotherly graces corresponding to that unity into which Christians are brought by their common possession of Christ. I. AN ENUMERATION OF THE FAIR GARMENTS OF THE NEW MAN. 1. Let us go over the wardrobe of the consecrated soul. (1) A heart of compassion; the rendering by conventional propriety of a phrase it regards as coarse, simply because Jews choose one part of the body and we another as the supposed seat of the emotions. Is it not beautiful that the series should begin with pity? What every man needs, and most often, and yet what is so difficult to achieve in the face of obstructions of occupation, selfishness, and custom. Therefore we have to make conscious efforts to "put" it "on." Without it no help will be of much use to the receiver, nor any to the giver. Aid flung to a man as a bone to a dog usually gets as much gratitude as it deserves. But if we make another's sorrows ours, that teaches us tact and gentleness. But beware of letting the emotion be excited, and then not allowing it to act. (2) Kindness. A wider benignity, with which some are so dowered that they come like the sunshine. But all can cultivate it. When we come out of the secret place of the Most High, we shall bear some reflection of Him whose "tender mercies are over all His works." This is the opposite of that worldly wisdom which prides itself on its knowledge of men and is suspicious of everybody. It is the most powerful solvent of ill-will and indifference. (3) Humility. That seems to bring a virtue occupied with self into the middle of a series referring exclusively to others. But the following graces have reference to our demeanour under slights and injuries, and humility constitutes the foundation for the right bearing of these. This is not necessarily blindness to our strong points. Milton would be none the less humble though he was sure that his work was better than that of Sternhold and Hopkins. Any unchristian fire of pride which the devil's breath may blow up should be damped by "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" and "Who is pure before God's judgment-seat?" (4) The distinction between meekness and long-suffering is slight. The former is the temper which accepts God's dealings, or evil inflicted by men without resistance, and its opposite is rudeness or harshness; the latter the long holding out before giving way to a temptation to an action or passion, and its opposite is swift resentment. While long-suffering does not get angry soon, meekness does not get angry at all. (5) Forbearing and forgiving are meekness and long-suffering in exercise. A man may forbear and bite his lips till the blood comes rather than speak unkindly, but forgiveness is an entire wiping of enmity and irritation out of the heart. 2. Is this a type of character that the world admires? Is it not uncommonly like what most people call "a poor spiritless creature"? It was a new man emphatically, for the world had never seen anything like it; and it is a new man still. It may be true

that Christianity has added no new virtue to those prescribed by conscience, but it has altered the perspective of the whole, and created a type of excellence in which the gentler virtues predominate, and the novelty of which is proved by the reluctance of men to recognize it. By its side worldly "heroic virtues" are vulgar and glaring, like some daub of a soldier on a sign-board by the side of Angelico's white-robed visions. Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. 3. The great pattern and motive of forgiveness. "As Christ has forgiven us." (1) The R. V. adopts the reading of "the Lord" which recalls the parable about the servant who had been forgiven by his "Lord," and yet squeezed the last farthing out of his fellow-servant. The parallel passage in the Ephesians speaks of "God for Christ's sake forgiving us." Observe the interchange of Divine office and attributes. What notion of Christ's Person underlies it? (2) Christ's forgiveness is not simply revealed that trembling hearts may be made calm. A heart softened by pardon will be a heart apt to pardon. (3) This new pattern and motive make the novelty and difference of Christian morality. "As I have loved you" makes "Love one another" a new commandment. Obedience to one we love is delightful. (4) We have each to choose what shall be the pattern for us. The world takes Cæsar, the Christian takes Christ. (5) This is not inconsistent with the Lord's prayer, which teaches us that our forgiveness is the condition of God's. Without the first we shall not be conscious of the second. II. THE GIRDLE WHICH KEEPS THE GARMENTS IN THEIR PLACES. 1. "Above all" is equivalent to "over." The silken sash of love will brace all the rest into a unity. "Perfectness" does not mean that it is the perfect principle of union, but is a collective expression for the various graces which together make up perfection. Love knits into a harmonious whole virtues which would otherwise be fragmentary and incomplete. 2. We can conceive of the dispositions named as existing in some fashion without love, but let love come into the heart and knit a man to the poor creature whom he had only pitied before, or to the enemy whom he had only been able to forgive with an effort, and it lifts these into a nobler life. 3. Perhaps there is the deeper truth that love produces all these graces. The virtues are best cultivated by cultivating it. Paul elsewhere calls love the fulfilling of the law even as his Master had taught him that all the duties were summed up in love to God and love to man. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *The elect and their duties.*—I. THE QUALITIES OF THE ELECT OF GOD. 1. They are chosen and separated from the world to serve God according to the discipline of the gospel (Eph. i. 4). It is this that Moses represented to ancient Israel the type of the new (Deut. xxvi. 18). They who boast of being elected but lead a godless life mock God and man. Election is ever accompanied by conversion and sanctification. No one knows of his election but by its effects. 2. They are holy—all of them. Paul is not of Rome's opinion that none are saints but the canonized. In the Creed, the Church, which is the body of all true Christians, is called holy, and the communion of saints. No man can be a Christian who is not a saint (Rom. viii. 9). This quality obliges us to the following virtues which are parts of holiness (Lev. xi. 44; xx. 26). 3. Beloved of God. This obliges us to love God, the effect of which is—(1) Obedience, which includes every virtue (John xiv. 15). (2) Transformation into the thing loved; so that God being charity, justice, and holiness, if we love Him, we shall put these on. II. THE GRACES OF THE ELECT. 1. Mercy is a tenderness which causes us to commiserate the miseries of others as if we took part in them ourselves. "Bowels of mercies" is a Hebrew expression signifying that the real virtue is one which moves the heart, and is not merely a face expression. The gospel has no affinity with stoicism, which holds compassion to be an infirmity (Luke vi. 36; 1 Pet. iii. 8; Rom. xiii. 15), and is exemplified in Christ (Heb. v. 2; iv. 15). 2. Kindness is a goodness of nature that takes pleasure in obliging and avoids injuring. We are obliged to this by our stewardship of God's manifold grace. 3. Humility is the mother of patience and the nurse of charity. It is a difficult virtue to proud man, and its difficulty arises out of our ignorance of ourselves and our relation to God. Could we know this pride would be impossible. 4. Meekness is gentleness, the most amiable ornament of life, which receives every one with an open heart and pleasing countenance, takes things in good part, and is proof against self-injurious irritations. 5. Patience is the sister of gentleness, and undergoes affronts under which gentleness might break down. 6. For the better clearing of these Paul adds—(1) Forbearance (Matt. xii. 20). (2) Forgiveness (Matt. xviii. 35). III. THE EXEMPLAR OF THE ELECT (Eph. iv. 32). What stronger reason could he urge? Christ being the image to which we ought to be conformed, how shall we be His living portraits if we have not the goodness He has shown to

us? (Matt. xviii. 32-33). We were His enemies, and His treatment of us must be our inspiration and model in our treatment of our enemies. (*J. Daillé.*) *Gentle Christians*:—A true Christian is like the lily which stings no one, and yet he lives among those who are full of sharpness. He aims to please, and not to provoke, and yet he lives among those whose existence is a standing menace. The thorn tears and lacerates: it is all armed from its root to its topmost branch, defying all comers. But there stands the lily, smiling, not defying; charming, and not harming. Such is the real Christian, holy, harmless, full of love and gentleness and tenderness. Therein lieth his excellence. Who would not stop and turn aside to see a lily among thorns, and think he reads a promise from his God to comfort him amid distress? Such is a true Christian: he is a consolation in his family, a comfort in his neighbourhood, an ornament to his profession, and a benediction to his age. He is all tenderness and gentleness, and yet it may be he lives among the envious, the malicious, and the profane, a lily among thorns. The thorn saith, "Keep away; no one shall touch me with impunity." The lily cries, "I come to you, I shed my soul abroad to please you." *The power of kindness*:—A Christian lady, in the course of visitation, was told of a very depraved woman, who was ruining herself by debauchery, but was of so violent a temper that no one durst interfere with her. She proposed to go up and see her, but was warned, "she will kill you." She bethought her, "If my Lord were here, He would do it." She went and entered the miserable apartment, and saw her lying in a corner as if a bundle of rags. She spoke, and an old, withered, miserable-looking creature raised herself upon her elbow, and with frenzied look, demanded what she wanted. She replied, "I love you; I want to be kind to you, because Jesus loves you." She went forward and kissed her brow, and, notwithstanding violent, repelling words, kissed her again. Then came the exclamation, "Go away, go away! you will break my heart; you put me in mind of my mother. Never has any one kissed me as she did; never have I been so treated since I lost her: many kicks and blows have I had, but no kisses like this." The fountain of feeling was opened, the confidence of the heart was won, and step by step that all but utterly lost soul was led back to Jesus. *Election*.—As to this matter of election, I would to God that some who object to it were as common sense in this matter as they are in the daily actions of ordinary life. Let me assume that a purse has been lost in the next street containing a thousand guineas, and that whoever finds it may keep it. "Ha!" we say. "Well, only one can find it; what is the good of a thousand seeking it? Only one can have it; and if I am elected to be the man, it will come in my way." I never heard people reasoning so in an affair of that kind. Though only one may have it, ten thousand will strive for it if they know the conditions. There is one prize to be given in a school of five hundred scholars. The boys say, "Well, only one of us can get it, why should five hundred of us be toiling and fagging to get it?" Another boy says, "I know if I am to have the prize I shall get it; so I shall read no books, and make no preparation." You would not allow a boy to reason so. Yet there are men who say this, "If we are called to heaven we'll get to heaven; if we are elected to be saved, we need not make any effort about it." "Thou wicked and slothful servant; out of thine own mouth I condemn thee; the whole action of thy evil life shall be thy answer on the day of judgment." (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Election*:—A senator related to his son the account of the book containing the names of illustrious members of the commonwealth. The son desired to see the outside. It was glorious to look upon. "Oh! let me open it," said he. "Nay," said the father, "it's known only to the council." Then said the son, "Tell me if my name is there." "And that," said the father, "is a secret known only to the council, and cannot be divulged." Then he desired to know for what achievements the names were inscribed in that book. The father told him; and related the noble deeds by which they had eternized their names. "Such," said he, "are written, and none but such are written in the book." "And will my name be there?" asked the son. "I cannot tell thee," said the father; "but if thy deeds are like theirs, thou shalt be written in the book; if not, thou shalt not be written." And then the son consulted with himself, and he found that his whole deeds were playing, and singing, and drinking, and amusing himself; and he found that this was not noble. And as he could not count on his name being there as yet, he determined to make his calling and election sure. And thus "by patient continuance in well doing, the end is crowned with glory. (*Parton Hood.*) *Holy*.—*The nature of holiness*:—Holiness is religion shining. It is the candle lighted, and not hid under a bushel, but lighting the house. It is religious principle put into

motion. It is the love of God sent forth into circulation, on the feet and with the hands of love to man. It is faith gone to work. It is charity coined into actions, and devotion breathing benedictions on human suffering, while it goes up in intercessions to the Father of all piety. (*Bishop Huntington.*) *A holy life* is made up of a number of small things. Little words, not eloquent speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles, nor battles, nor one great heroic act or mighty martyrdom. The constant sunbeam, not the lightning; the waters of Siloam "that go softly" in the meek mission of refreshment, not the "waters of the river great and many," rushing down in torrents, are the emblems of a holy life. The avoidance of little evils, little sins, little inconsistencies, weaknesses, follies, indiscretions, imprudencies, foibles, indulgencies of self and of the flesh; the avoidance of such-like things as these goes far to make up at least the negative beauty of a holy life. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *A holy Church*.—A living thing grows from itself, and not by accession from without as a house grows. A flower does not grow by adding a leaf to it, nor a tree by fastening a branch to it, nor a man by fixing a limb to his frame. Everything that has life grows by a converting process, which transforms the food into means of nourishment and enlargement. A holy Church lives, and its holiness converts all its ordinances and provisions into means of deep-rooted, solid, enlarged, and beautiful usefulness. (*T. W. Jenkyn, D.D.*) *Beloved*.—The thought that some one loves us has great restraining influence. A young man or woman may be here without friends, alone in this vast city and surrounded by a thousand snares. But you cannot forget that far away in some distant town or village there is a father whose heart yearns towards you, a mother who never ceases with many tears to pray for you—and the thought that there is at least one in the world who loves you, is a stimulus to exertion, a safeguard against evil. Many an effort to do right is prompted by the thought that you are "beloved;" many a debasing pleasure is rejected, from many a seducing snare you turn aside, because you desire to act worthy of such love. And we are "beloved" of God. What an honour is this! Insignificant, sinful creatures of earth—thought of, cared for, beloved in heaven! If so, shall we not "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called?" Can we rejoice in being "beloved" of God while indulging enmity towards our brethren? Shall the fellow-servants hate one another while thus beloved by their Lord and Master? "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies." (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *The King's livery*.—As the soldier who is in the queen's service is required to appear in his uniform, that all may know his calling, so the soldier of Christ must appear clothed in certain characteristics needful to prove his loyalty, and show his allegiance to his Lord. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Bowels of mercies* (see Phil. i. 8).—I. THE NATURE OF THIS GRACE. The real inward and unpretended affection of condoling with another's woe. The phrase is a Hebraism, and is taken from the emotion, and, as it were, concussion which is felt in the stomach, in deep affections of the mind (Gen. xliii. 30; Lam. ii. 11; Luke i. 78; Phil. ii. 1). The apostle wisely begins with the expression of condolence; because from hence flows the act of relief; and because, as Gregory says, "it is more to compassionate any one from the heart, than to give: for he who gives what is external, gives what does not belong to his own person; but he who gives compassion, gives somewhat of himself." II. ITS OBJECTS. 1. Persons who have none to give them relief, as widows and orphans. 2. But in general it comprehends all oppressed with misery—the poor, the prisoner, the sick, the afflicted. III. ITS MOTIVES. 1. The express and oft repeated command of God (Luke vi. 36; Rom. xii. 15; 1 Pet. iii. 8). Whence Gregory Nazianzen says, "If thou hast nothing, give but a tear; for pity is a great solace to the afflicted." 2. The examples of the prophets, of Christ, and the apostles, and of all good men (Jer. ix. 1; Matt. ix. 36; Luke xix. 41; 2 Cor. xi. 29). Hence that saying of the poet, "The good are tear-abounding men." 3. The conformity of nature, and the possibility of suffering similar things. The possibility of suffering similar evils, when seriously considered, forces mercy from any man that is not destitute of feeling. For what has happened to some one may happen to any one. IV. HENCE WE CONCLUDE—1. The apathy of the Stoics must be exploded by a Christian; as not agreeing either with our natural condition or our supernatural regeneration. Prosper well remarks, "We are not in fault for having affections, but for making a bad use of them." 2. Bowels of mercy are found in every regenerate person: he is therefore moved at the very first view of another's misery. 3. They who, ere they can be excited to mercy, must have much solicitation from the afflicted, can lay claim to little or nothing of the spiritual man; they

who are not moved by these, have nothing human in them. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Pity*:—As love is the most delightful passion, pity is nothing else than love softened by a degree of sorrow. It is a kind of pleasing anguish as well as generous sympathy that knits mankind together, and blends them in the same common lot. (*Addison.*) *The power of compassion*:—There is something marvellous in the spirit of compassion. I do not mean that it seems to feel a positive pleasure in breathing the atmosphere of distress, nor that it seems to find time for every kind of well-doing, nor that the heart and memory are so enlarged that a range of interest ten times wider and more varied than personal interest finds room, but that compassion, though it is not talent nor energy, stands in the stead of these and does their work. The social good that is done in the world is not the work of its greatest minds. These set themselves one great task, and gather up all their powers for its accomplishment. They are jealous even of the minutes of their time. They resist all distractions. The compassionate man gives up his time to others, and yet seems to find time for all things. Like the bread miraculously multiplied, he gives, and yet he gathers up for himself more than he gave. How great, again, is its power to find its way to the miserable heart. Convince the wretched man that you know his misery and would ease his burden, and you have already made it lighter. Show the vicious man that you can see in him something worth caring for, and you thereby take off the despair that is at the bottom of so much vice. Let your enemy see that you have not room in your heart for any bitterness against him, and his arm will fall powerless. (*Archbishop Thomson.*) *Religion moves to pity*:—Now I would like you to mark that there is not a true grace of a Christian man, nor a true activity of the disciple of Christ, which does not lead to pity and love like this. Repentance leads to it, for repentance laments selfishness as the essence of its evil, and dreads relapsing into a religion which would be merely a selfishness refined; and repentance remembers its lost estate, the fearful pit and miry clay, and pities those that are still struggling in it; so repentance cherishes love and moves to pity. Faith kindles these virtues. You cannot take refuge in the heart of Christ, and build your hope upon redeeming love, and rejoice in His saving pity that stooped to Calvary, without catching some of the qualities on which you rest. Your heart softens with the warmth of that heart on which it rests, and is kindled by the pity in which it takes refuge. As our faith leads to these qualities, decision moves to them. Except we deny ourselves we cannot be disciples. Self-renunciation, which is the beginning of discipleship, leaves the heart free to cherish love. The comforts of religion move to them. Forgiveness, and peace, and hope, and gratitude swell the heart with the question, "What shall I render?" and move it to share its mercies with those that still lack them. All adoration of God kindles them. In the degree in which we see Him as He is, see Him in the face of Christ, see Him as He weeps over Jerusalem or groans on Calvary, in the degree in which we see the pitiful woe that sometimes fills God's heart: in that degree we are changed. All hope changes the heart and fills it with this spirit. Hope of earthly providence and hope of immortal heaven, both move men to pity and to love. Every step you take in following Christ kindles pity, for when He leads it is not always unto green pastures and rapturous heights: it is to the haunts of misery, to the widows of Nain, to homes of grief. He would use us, borrows our hand to wipe away a tear, our voice to still a grief. Exactly in that degree in which He employs us, and we follow Him step by step, exactly in that degree do we catch the spirit in which He lived, and the compassion which is the everlasting motive and the perpetual habit of our God. So that I want you to observe that there is not a single Christian instinct, activity, relationship, employment, or grace which does not work out in love and pity. (*R. Glover.*) *Pity the secret of prophetic light*:—I want to point out that in love and pity, such as is here expressed, you have not merely the work of the disciple, but you have the secret of prophetic light: that Paul's light was due, not to his genius, not to his erudition, not even so much specially to heavenly effulgence that visited him, as to the fact that he had a heart of love and pity that could enter and absorb the light of God. Is it not obvious that it was so? We know God by what is kindred to Him, and by what resembles Him. It was Paul's love of man that could read God's love of man, that gazed on God till "the shadow" grew into a "face" and the "face" of God was seen glowing with infinite love. He would have been in the darkness till now if his love had not permitted him to see God's love. The light is ever shining. It is the eye, the eye of the heart, that is wanted; and that he had. He looked on man, not with the cynical eye that sees only what moves men to despair of, or to despise

them; but he looked with a loving heart, and could see the world in God's light; something that made man a pearl of great price in his Saviour's eyes. He could see Divine movings in them; high capacity: possibilities of change; unrest—all these Divine elements, on which grace could move, and which grace could lead to light. He looked in the face of Christ, and his yearning permitted him to behold Christ's yearning, so that his love and his pity enlarged his heart, and opened it to light. He walked in the light of the Lord, and truths too grand for poorer eyes lay naked and open to his. One of the greatest theologians of the century, Neander, took for his motto, "It is the heart that makes the theologian." And one of the greatest historians, Niebuhr, uttered some similar words: "I have said, again and again, I will have no metaphysical deity, but the God of the Bible, who is heart to heart." (*Ibid.*)

Kindness.—*The blessings of a benignant spirit.*—I. IN WHAT KINDNESS CONSISTS. 1. In a disposition to be pleased; a willingness to be satisfied with others. This goes a long way towards our being actually pleased. This temper stands opposed to the spirit of fault-finding, the propensity to magnify trifles. 2. In a disposition to attribute to others good motives when we can do so. One of the rights of every man is to have it supposed that he acts with good intentions until it is proved to the contrary. 3. In bearing with the infirmities of others. We do not journey long with a fellow traveller before we find that he is far from perfection, and the closer our relations become the more necessity there is for bearing patiently the foibles of others. In the most tender connexions, that of husband and wife, &c., it may require much of a gentle and yielding spirit to so adapt ourselves that life shall move on smoothly and harmoniously. When there is a disposition to do this we soon learn to bear and forbear, and to avoid the look, gesture, allusion, that would excite improperly the mind of our friend. Like children, we must allow each other to build his own play-house in his own way. Conscious of our own imperfection we must be indulgent to others. 4. In not blaming others harshly when they fall into sin. In no circumstances do men need kindness so much as here. We weep with the bereaved, we sympathize with the unfortunate; but when a man is overtaken in a fault our sympathies frequently die. Yet they ought then to be in fullest operation (Gal. vi. 1). Remember—(1) He is a brother still. (2) If all the circumstances were known the aspect ought to be changed (Luke vi. 37; 1 Pet. iv. 8). (3) An explanation may remove the difficulty, therefore give him the opportunity. 5. It prompts us to aid others when in our power. If relief cannot be afforded it should be declined with a gentle and benevolent heart.

II. ITS VALUE. 1. Much of the comfort of life depends upon it. Life is made up of little things, which, if displaced, render us miserable. Breathing, the beating of the heart, the circulation of the blood, are small matters, and ordinarily scarcely noticed, but when deranged we are sensible of their importance. So in morals and social intercourse. The happiness of life depends not so much on great and glorious deeds as on quiet duties, the gentle spirit, the cheerful answer, the smiling face, &c. 2. Usefulness depends upon it. This and far more than on deeds which excite general admiration. The rivulet that glides through the meadow is far more useful than the grand cataract. Kindness prompts us to seek the good and happiness of others. And it is by this, and not by great martyrdoms, that men will judge of the nature of the gospel. All usefulness may be prevented by a sour temper. Nothing will compensate for the want of that charity which is "kind." 3. It is commended by the example of Jesus (2 Cor. x. 1). Christ performed great deeds, but not that we should imitate them. But He was meek and gentle that we might be so too. (4. *Barnes, D.D.*)

Kindness.—The fundamental idea of kindness is ascertained by tracing the connection between kindred or kin and kindness. The latter is the feeling natural to us in relation to our own kind. 1. Take the innermost circle of kindred, the home, and that which constitutes its sweetness is kindness. Unkindness, then, is most unnatural. In German and Dutch the word for child is kind. Kindness was first of all the relation of a child to its parents, and then the feeling of a parent for a child. That was the original and architypal kindness, is its ever present and undying element, and gives character and tone to all the more extended instances of kindness which ripple out with the extension of our kinship. 2. Though our kindred begins in our homes it does not end there. We have remoter relatives to whom it is our duty, and the prompting of our natures, to be kind. Our nation consists of individuals who are of our own kind, and we ought to be kindly towards them all. And then our kith and kin are found in colonies, and the parent state should always feel kindly towards them, and when any colony grows into an independent nation, like the United States of America, it would be a

calamity and a sin if kindness on either side were to cease. 3. The family relationship extends farther than to those who manifest their kinship by the use of the common mother tongue, embalmed in the English Bible. The Dutch and Germans are our cousins, so are the Danes; and there was a time when the Greeks also, and the Romans belonged to the same family circle. Their ancestors came from the same paternal home in Asia from which our ancestors came; and so with the Hindoos, and hence the old old words which are common to the now diverse languages. 4. Indeed, all the nations are kindred to each other. All the families of the earth belong to the great family of man—mankind; hence all owe kindness to one another. Hence Peter exhorts us to add to our godliness brotherly kindness. Some think it more difficult to attain the former than the latter. In some respects it is, in others not: and so the apostle urges us to seek the latter by way of the former. In mere speculation we might have supposed that man must first climb to the terrestrial thing—"brotherly kindness"—and thence ascend to the celestial. But the reverse is the true and better order. We must first get right with God the Father—then, and not till then, shall we get right with man the brother. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The power of kindness*.—"Go away from there, you old beggar boy! You've no right to be looking at our flowers," shouted a little fellow from the garden where he was standing. The poor boy, who was pale, dirty, and ragged, was leaning against the fence, admiring the splendid show of roses and tulips within. His face reddened with anger at the rude language, and he was about to answer defiantly, when a little girl sprang out from an arbour near, and looking at both, said to her brother,—"How could you speak so, Herbert! I'm sure his looking at the flowers don't hurt us." And then, to soothe the wounded feelings of the stranger, she added: "Little boy, I'll pick you some flowers, if you'll wait a moment," and she immediately gathered a pretty bouquet, and handed it through the fence. His face brightened with surprise and pleasure, and he earnestly thanked her. Twelve years after this occurrence, the girl had grown to a woman. One bright afternoon she was walking with her husband in the garden, when she observed a young man in workman's dress, leaning over the fence, and looking attentively at her and at the flowers. Turning to her husband, she said,—"It does me good to see people admiring the garden; I'll give that young man some of the flowers;" and approaching him she said, "Are you fond of flowers, sir? It will give me great pleasure to gather you some." The young workman looked a moment into her fair face, and then said in a voice tremulous with feeling: "Twelve years ago I stood here a ragged little beggar boy, and you showed me the same kindness. The bright flowers and your pleasant words made a new boy of me; aye, and they have made a man of me, too. Your face, madam, has been a light to me in many dark hours of life; and now, thank God, though that boy is still an humble, hard-working man, he is an honest and grateful one." Tears stood in the eyes of the lady as, turning to her husband, she said, "God put it into my young heart to do that kindness, and see how great a reward it has brought. (*American Agriculturist.*)

Humbleness of mind.—I. THE NATURE OF THIS TEMPER: A low apprehension or esteem of ourselves (Rom. xii. 3), the opposite to pride and arrogance. The word leads us to consider the disposition of mind; for there may be a humility of behaviour which covers a very proud heart. It consists of—1. A humble apprehension of our own knowledge (1 Cor. viii. 1). There is nothing of which men are more proud. Many would sooner bear a reflection on their moral characters than on their understandings. The serpent was early sensible that this was man's weak side (Gen. iii. 5). And no kind of pride has more need of a cure (Job xi. 12). So it will include—(1) A sense of the natural imperfection of our faculties (Job xi. 7). This will dispose us to receive God's revelation (1 Cor. ii. 10-11). (2) An apprehension of our own fallibility. Humility in this view would teach us (a) not on that account to surrender ourselves to the absolute control of others. To this Rome would lead us in pretence of infallibility; and if any others would lead us to such an implicit faith in their dictates, while they disclaim infallibility, their claim is still more absurd. We must answer for ourselves to God in the great day; and therefore it can neither be a laudable nor a safe humility to take our religion from the dictates of fallible men. (b) But a just apprehension of our liability to mistake should induce us in all our searches after Divine truth to be very desirous of Divine illumination and guidance (Psa. xxv. 4-5). It should keep us ever open to further light and willing to learn. (3) A moderate apprehension of our own attainments in knowledge when we compare them with the attainments of other men (1 Cor. xiii. 9; viii. 2). If some know less, others know more than we. (4)

A persuasion of the small value of the most exalted knowledge without a suitable practical influence (John xiii. 7; Luke xii. 47-48). A man of low attainments, if his heart is right with God, is truly acceptable; while a resolved sinner, though he understood all mysteries, will be eternally disowned by Him. Exalted knowledge may leave a man of no better a temper than a devil. 2. Humble thoughts of our own goodness. Not that we are to be insensible to anything that is truly good in us; but Christian humility includes—(1) A sense of the undeservingness of our own goodness at the hands of God even if it was perfect (Luke xvii. 10). (2) An apprehension of the disparity between the goodness of God and that of any creature (Luke xviii. 19). (3) An affecting conviction of our own sinfulness (Luke v. 31-32). (4) A sense of the imperfection of our goodness at its best (Psa. xix. 12). (5) An acknowledgment that we are principally indebted to God for whatever is good in us (Phil. i. 6; 1 Cor. iv. 7, vi. 11, xv. 10). (6) A modest apprehension of our own goodness compared with that of other men (Phil. ii. 3). 3. A humble sense of our dependence and wants—(1) As regards God. (a) In the sphere of nature (Acts xvii. 28). (b) In the sphere of grace. We should have a deep sense of our need of His mercy to pardon our sins and His grace to help our infirmities. (2) As regards our fellow-creatures. It is ordered by the law of our creation that we cannot comfortably subsist independent of them (Eccles. v. 9). Every link in the chain of societies contributes to the good of the whole (1 Cor. xii. 21, 24). And then in the changeableness of human affairs, those who are now in the most prosperous estate know not how soon they may need the kind offices of the lowliest. 4. A modest apprehension of our own rank and station. (1) As compared with God we cannot think too low of ourselves (Isa. xl. 15). All our relations to Him bespeak the profoundest submission, as His creatures, subjects, children (Psa. viii. 4, cxliv. 3; Job vii. 17). Humility will teach us to dispute neither the precepts nor the providences of Him who has a natural authority over us. (2) Revelation teaches us that we are beneath other invisible beings (Psa. vii. 5). (3) For our fellow-creatures we should consider them all as of the same nature with us, and therefore near akin (Acts xvii. 26), and that distinctions in outward circumstances are in the account of God and in themselves but little things (Rom. xiii. 7, xii. 16).

II. The SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS WHICH REST ON Christians to cultivate this temper. 1. Humility is a grace of the first rank. (1) It is mentioned in Scripture with peculiar marks of distinction (Micah vi. 8; Prov. viii. 13; Psa. cxxxviii. 6; Matt. v. 4, xviii. 4). (2) The most distinguished promises are made to it (Psa. ix. 12, x. 17; Isa. lvii. 15; James iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 5; Matt. xxiii. 12). (3) It is in its own nature a necessary introduction to the other graces and duties of Christianity. This is not a religion for the proud but for the lowly. (a) Humility is necessary to faith. Without this we shall not have a disposition to receive a revelation. Pride and self-sufficiency was the reason why Christ crucified was a stumbling-block to the Jew, &c. (b) To obedience. A proud heart says, "Who is the Lord over me?" Humility asks, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (c) To the acceptance of Christ as offered in the gospel (Luke v. 31; Rev. iii. 17-18; Luke xviii. 9-13). (d) To the reception of the grace of the Holy Spirit. (e) To perseverance, for without it we shall be ready to take offence at crosses. (f) To the reception of assistance in the way to heaven from other men. Those who are wise in their own conceit despise admonitions. (g) To the performance of Christian duty. 2. It is this grace which adorns every other virtue and recommends religion to every beholder (1 Pet. v. 5). 3. It is recommended by the example of Christ. (1) His incarnation was the greatest instance of humility (Phil. ii. 3, 5, &c.; 2 Cor. viii. 9). (2) When He appeared in human nature He affected not worldly honour (Luke ii. 7-11; Matt. xiii. 55). (3) As a man He was the pattern of great humility toward God (John viii. 50, vii. 18; Mark xiii. 32; Matt. x. 17). (4) He was the pattern of the greatest humility to mankind. (a) He was ready to condescend to the meanest in order to their good (Matt. viii. 6; Mark x. 46; John iv. 27; Matt. xviii. 1-10, xix. 13-14). (b) He was willing to stoop to the meanest offices for the meanest persons (Mark i. 41; John xiii. 5; Matt. xx. 28). (c) He was not above receiving and acknowledging the respect shown Him by the meanest (Luke viii. 3; Matt. xxi. 15, xxvi. 13). Learn, then, like Him, to be meek and lowly of heart. 4. Humility is a grace which will go along with us to heaven. The only inhabitants of that world who were ever lifted up with pride have been cast out. The angels abase themselves (Isa. vi. 2, 3; Rev. iv. 10, v. 10, vii. 11, xi. 16), and humility will receive a glorious reward (Matt. xxv.). Like charity, it never faileth. (*Dr. Evans.*)

Humility a safeguard:—A French general, riding on horseback at the head of his

troops, heard a soldier complain and say, "It is very easy for the general to command us forward while he rides and we walk." Then the general dismounted and compelled the complaining soldier to get on his horse. Coming through a ravine a bullet from a sharpshooter struck the rider and he fell dead. Then the general said, "How much safer it is to walk than to ride." *Humility and cheerfulness* :—

Observe the peculiar characters of the grass which adapt it especially for the service of man are humility and cheerfulness—its humility, in that it seems created only for lowest service, appointed to be trodden on and fed upon; its cheerfulness, in that it seems to exalt under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is the stronger next day; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots as if it were grateful; you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume. Spring comes, and it rejoices with all the earth, glowing with variegated flame of flowers, waving in soft depth of fruitful strength. Winter comes, and though it will not mock its fellow-plants by growing then, it will not pine and mourn, and turn colourless or leafless as they. It is always green, and is only the brighter and gayer for the hoar frost. (*J. Ruskin.*) *Meekness*.—*Meekness: its nature* :—Meekness is love at school, at the Saviour's school. It is the disciple learning to know himself, to fear, distrust, and abhor himself. It is the disciple practising the sweet, but self-emptying lesson of putting on the Lord Jesus, and finding all his righteousness in that righteous other. It is the disciple learning the defects of his own character, and taking hints from hostile as well as friendly monitors. It is the disciple praying and watching for the improvement of his talents, the mellowing of his temper, and the amelioration of his character. It is the loving Christian at his Saviour's feet, learning from Him who is meek and lowly, and finding rest for his own soul. (*James Hamilton, D.D.*) *Meekness: its blending* :—It is power blended with gentleness, boldness with humility, the harmlessness of the dove with the prowess of the lion. It is the soul in the majesty of self-possession, elevated above the precipitant, the irascible, the boisterous, the revengeful. It is the soul throwing its benignant smiles on the furious face of the foe, and penetrating his heart and paralyzing his arm with the look of love. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Meekness: its power* :—Sir Walter Raleigh, a man of courage and honour, was once insulted by a hot-headed youth, who challenged him, and on his refusal spat upon him in public. The knight, taking out his handkerchief, made this reply: "Young man, if I could as easily wipe your blood from my conscience as I can this injury from my face, I would this moment take away your life." The youth was so struck with a sense of his misbehaviour that he fell upon his knees and asked forgiveness. (*E. Foster.*)

Meekness: its blessedness :—It is in the lowly valley that the sun's warmth is truly genial; unless indeed there are mountains so close and abrupt as to overshadow it. Then noisome vapours may be bred there; but otherwise, in the valley we may behold the wonderful blessing bestowed upon the meek that they shall inherit the earth. It is theirs for this very reason, because they do not seek it. They do not exalt their heads like icebergs, which, by the by, are driven away from earth, and cluster—or rather jostle—round the pole; but they flow along the earth humbly and silently; and wherever they flow they bless it; and so all its beauty and all its richness are reflected in their peaceful bosoms. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) *Meekness: its usefulness* :—The timber of the elder tree is the softest, and can without difficulty be split, cut, and wrought, and yet it does not rot in water. The greater part of the city of Venice stands upon piles of elder, which, sunk into the sea, form the foundation of massive buildings. It is the same with meek hearts. There is no better foundation for important undertakings of public or private utility than that intelligent modesty which is gentle indeed, and ready to yield as far as a good conscience will allow, but which, nevertheless, lasts and continues stable, in the flood of contradiction. (*Gotthold.*) *Long-suffering* is threefold.—I. IN JUDGMENT; when, in doubtful cases, we suspend our opinions and censures. II. IN WORDS; which consists either in not answering, or in giving soft answers. III. IN DEEDS; when we render not evil for evil. (*N. Byfield.*) *Long-suffering rewarded* :—

Some years ago I had in my garden a tree that never bore. One day I was going down, with my axe in my hand, to fell it. My wife met me in the pathway and pleaded for it, saying, "Why, the spring is now very near; stay, and see whether there may not be some change; and, if not, you can deal with it accordingly." As I never repented following her advice, I yielded to it now; and what was the consequence? In a few weeks the tree was covered in blossoms; and in a few weeks more it was bending with fruit. "Ah," said I, "this should teach me not to cut down too soon, i.e., not to consider persons incorrigible or abandoned too soon, so as to give up hope and the use of the means in their behalf." (*W. Jay.*)

Ver. 13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.—Forbearance:—To forbear is not only freely to forgive, but to meet half way, with extended hand (*E.T.E.B.*). During the celebrated John Henderson's residence at Oxford, a student of a neighbouring college, proud of his logical achievements, was solicitous of a private disputation. Some mutual friends introduced him, and having chosen his subject, they conversed for some time with equal candour and moderation; but at length Henderson's antagonist, perceiving his own confusion inevitable, in the height of passion threw a full glass of wine in Henderson's face. The latter, without altering his features, or changing his position, gently wiped his face, and coolly replied, "This, sir, is a digression. Now for the argument." A greater victory than any controversial success could have given him. (*Cottle.*) *Divine forgiveness admired and imitated:—I. STUDY THE PATTERN OF FORGIVENESS.* 1. What is this forgiveness of Christ? (1) He forgave offences most great and grievous. Men did all they could against Him. Say not that you have never thus transgressed. "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." These offences were unprovoked. Towards no man had He acted harshly. Such is human depravity that His very virtue provoked hostility. "They hated Me without a cause." He continues to forgive causeless wrong. (2) He forgave the most unworthy persons. None deserved such kindness; in fact, to talk of deserving it is a contradiction. If He had left us in our sin we could have brought no complaint against Him. (3) He had always power to execute vengeance. Some pardon because they cannot punish. Half the forgiveness in the world comes from weakness of hand rather than forgiveness of heart. 2. How did He forgive? (1) Unsolicited. Before we had thought of mercy He had thoughts of mercy toward us. "I have blotted out . . . return unto Me." Pardon is not first as matter of experience, but it is as matter of fact with God. (2) Heartily. Forgiveness when it comes from human lips in studied phrase is not worth the having: but when Jesus absolves it is from the heart, and sin is put away for ever. (3) Completely. He keeps no back reckonings. "I will not remember thy sins." Even fathers, when they have forgiven a wayward child, will, perhaps, throw the offence in his teeth years after; but Christ says, "Thy sins shall not be mentioned against thee any more." (4) Continuously. He forgave us long ago. He still forgives. It is not a reprieve, but a free pardon. (5) Graciously. Some people make it appear as though they were coming down from such awful heights. You never feel that about Christ. He never scolds the sinner with scornful pity. (6) Greatly. The offence had brought trouble into the world, and He bore that trouble. Some people hand us over to consequences; Christ delivers us from them. (7) Consciously. There is a theory abroad that we may be forgiven and not know it. But the Holy Spirit writes forgiveness on our hearts. **II. COPY IT FOR YOURSELVES.** 1. This precept is universally applicable. It is unqualified in its range. It is not put that superiors are to forgive inferiors, or the less are to forgive the greater. The rich are to be forbearing to the poor, and the poor to the rich; the elder is to forgive the junior for his imprudence, and the junior the elder for his petulence and slowness. 2. This forbearance and forgiveness are vital. No man is a child of God who has not a likeness to God; and no man is forgiven who will not himself forgive. 3. Gloriously ennobling. Revenge is paltry; forgiveness is great-minded. David was greater than Saul, and Saul acknowledged it. To win a battle is a little thing if fought out with sword and gun, but to win it in God's way with love and forgiveness is the best of victories. A nation in fighting, even if it wins the campaign, has to suffer, but he that overcomes by love is all the better and stronger for it. 4. Logically appropriate to all. If our Lord has forgiven us ten thousand talents, how can we take our brother by the throat for one hundred pence. 5. Most forcibly sustained by the example in the text. "Even as Christ." It is said—(1) "If you pass by every wanton offence you will come to be despised." But has Christ's honour suffered? Far from it. It is His glory to forgive. (2) "If we overlook offences, other people may be tempted to wrong us." But has any been tempted to do so because Christ has forgiven you? Why, that is the very groundwork of holiness. (3) "I know several pious persons who are unforgiving." But that proves their impiety; and if it did not, the Master is your example, not your fellow-servant, particularly in his faults. (4) "These persons would not have forgiven me." Just so; but you are a child of God, and must not lower your standard down to that of publicans and sinners. (5) "I would forgive him, but he does not deserve it." That is why you are to forgive him; if he deserved it you would be bound to do him the justice he could claim. (6) "I cannot forgive."

You "can do all things through Christ that strengthens you." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Human forgiveness:—The world is rife with human quarrels; families, neighbourhoods, Churches, have their quarrels. They arise from many principles in the depraved heart besides misunderstandings. Hence forgiveness is important. The text suggests two things concerning forgiveness. I. **THE DUTY.** Here it is urged as well as in other places (Rom. xii. 19). Besides this there are two reasons. 1. You desire forgiveness yourself. Who would like to have the vengeance of a man always in his heart towards him? If you would like forgiveness, you must do as you would be done by. 2. You need forgiveness yourself when you have offended. He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself has to pass. Besides, an unforgiving spirit is an injury to its possessor. II. **ITS MODEL.** "Even as Christ." 1. How did Christ forgive? Promptly, generously, fully, without any reflection upon past offences. 2. Examples: The woman taken in adultery. His enemies—"Father, forgive them." The dying thief. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Forgiveness implies:—1. The remission of the right to retaliate when safe and proper. 2. The dismissal of the revengeful feelings which injury may have excited. 3. The revival of those feelings of goodwill which it becomes us habitually to cherish. (*W. Fleming.*)

Forth-giving:—To forgive a thing is to "forthgive" by your own act and freewill, to give it forth from you that it may go clean out from you—out of sight and out of mind. **Forgiveness a distinctively Christian virtue:**—We cannot say that it was unknown to the ancients; under certain conditions, no doubt, it was very common. In domestic life, in which all the germs of Christian virtue are to be found, it was undoubtedly common. Undoubtedly friends fell out and were reconciled in antiquity as among ourselves. But when the only relation between the two parties was that of injurer and injured, and the only claim of the offender to forgiveness was that he was a human being, then forgiveness seems not only not to have been practised, but not to have been enjoined nor approved. People not only did not forgive their enemies, but did not wish to do so, nor think better of themselves for having done so. That man considered himself fortunate who on his deathbed could say, in reviewing his past life, that no one had done more good to his friends or more mischief to his foes. The Roman Triumph, with its naked ostentation of revenge, fairly represents the common feeling of the ancients. Nevertheless, forgiveness even of any enemy was not unknown to them. They could conceive it, and they could feel that there was a Divine beauty in it, but it seemed to them more than could be expected of human nature, superhuman. (*Ecce Homo.*)

International forgiveness:—Is that which is right between individuals wrong as between societies? Am I to forbear and forgive when acting alone, but when associated with two or three others am I to manifest a different spirit? Is my individual conscience to be merged in the associated conscience, and does the Christian law for a society differ from the law for individuals? Enlarge the society till it becomes the nation. Is the law of Christ abrogated? It would seem to be so considered by the "Christian nations" of the world. Why is Europe in time of peace an entrenched camp? Why are millions of the strongest and healthiest men withdrawn from productive labours and domestic life to be trained in the art of killing, while the people groan under the burden of a taxation and a poverty God never sent? Because in international law there is so little recognition of the Divine precept—"forbearing one another and forgiving one another." Because many who in their private relations manifest meekness and gentleness, as politicians and statesmen seem to think the old Pagan law is unrevoked. How few of the wars which have desolated Europe during the last thousand years would have been waged had it been more than nominally Christian! If instead of resenting every supposed affront, of vindicating on every petty occasion what is called the honour of a flag, of supposing the dignity of an empire precludes all forbearance, patience, and concession, there had been even a little of the "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering" enjoined in our text, the history of the world had been differently written; heathen nations would have said, "see how these Christians love;" instead of the flags of Europe inspiring terror in distant regions, they would have been everywhere hailed as symbols of peace; and the old prophecy would have had a fulfilment in the case of Christendom—"the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion." (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*)

A quarrel.—A quarrel: Both sides wrong:—In most quarrels there is a fault on both sides. A quarrel may be compared to a spark, which cannot be produced without a flint as well as a steel; either of them may hammer on wood for ever, no fire will follow. (*R. South.*)

Quarrels prolonged:—"I have seen in the south

of France a row of beggars sitting on the side of a bridge, day after day, winter and summer, showing sore legs and sore arms; these sores never get well, they were kept continually raw with caustic in order to excite compassion and obtain alms. And the most bitter jealousy reigned between these beggars as to the size and irritability of their respective sores. The man with only an inflamed knee burned with envy of the man whose whole leg was raw. Not for all the world would they let their wounds heal, as that would cut off from them a means of livelihood. I fear a great many people love their grievances against neighbours much as those beggars loved their sores. They keep them constantly open and irritable by inventing and applying fresh aggravations. They are proud of them, they like to expose their wrongs, as they call them, to all their neighbours." (S. Baring-Gould.)

Ver. 14. And above all these things put on charity.—*The grace of charity*:—I. Charity is the greatest of graces in the width and extent of its sphere. Other graces have particular things with which they are more intimately concerned; special parts of life on which they throw the light of their charm; special times in which they actively operate. They are like the winds that blow, the rain that falls, the snow that covers, or the lightning that purifies sometimes. But charity is like the Divine sunlight that shines on always, works always, tempers the winds, warms the rains, dissipates the mists, melts the snow; sometimes seen and felt, sometimes unseen, but never ceasing its influence, and recognizing no earth limits to its sphere. Charity covers the whole life and relationships of the Christian, and 1 Cor. xiii. maps out and distinguishes them. 1. The sphere of a brother's opinions. 2. The sphere of a brother's failings. 3. The sphere of a brother's sorrows. 4. The sphere of a brother's sins. II. Because of the difficulty with which it is attained. Difficulty is often the test of value. Gold is valued because of the cost and toil of procuring it. Charity is difficult mainly through the separatings of sin. Sin broke up the fellowship of the human family, and filled the world with opposing interests. Charity is to heal these great wounds, temper the opposing relations, and on its own substantial basis to make the human family one again. And, as charity is God's own nature, we have first to be reconciled to, and come into sympathy with Him. III. Because it never faileth. The summer flowers which blossom in beauty fade and fail. Charity is no summer flower born of earth, sunshine, and showers. It is a heaven-born plant; its flowers never fail; it is like the tree of life. (R. Tuck, B.A.) *Gospel charity*:—There is no grace or duty that is not commanded in Scripture, but this is commanded above all others (1 Pet. iv. 8; 1 Cor. xii. 31). I. THE NATURE OF THIS LOVE. It is the second great duty brought to light by the gospel. There is a natural love which follows on natural relations, and there is a love which arises from society in sin or in pleasure, from a suitableness of humour in conversation, or of design as to political ends, but all these are utter strangers to evangelical love. And therefore, when it was first brought to light by the gospel, the heathen were amazed. "See how these Christians love one another." What is this love. 1. It is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22), as contradistinguished from that which arises from our natural inclination. 2. It is an effect of faith. "Faith worketh by love." How? When it respects God's command requiring this love, His promise accepting it, and His glory whereunto it is directed. Self may work by love sometimes, and flesh, interest, and reputation, but not by this love. 3. It is that which knits the souls of believers with an entire affection (Eph. iv. 16; Psal. xvi. 2). (1) The whole mystical body of Christ being the adequate object of gospel love, it is indispensably required of us that we love all believers as such. But this is accompanied by some limitations. (a) In the exercise of it, it will much answer the evidence that persons are interested in the body of Christ. There are some whose opinions and practices will exercise the most extensive charity to judge that they belong to it. Yet, according to our evidence, so is our love to be. (b) There may be degrees in our love, especially as to delight and valuation, according as we see more or less of the image of Christ upon a believer, this likeness being the formal reason of this love. (c) Its exercise must be determined by opportunities. (2) There is required an inclination to all acts of love towards all believers, as opportunity shall serve. If we turn our face away from our brother how dwelleth the love of God in us? If it be in us let it be advantaged by any opportunity, and it will break through difficulties and pleas of flesh and blood. (3) Christ has provided us with a safe, suitable, and constant object by His institution of particular Churches. Let none, then, pretend that they

love the brethren in general while their love is not exercised towards those in the same Church society with them. II. THE GROUNDS WHY THIS LOVE IS SO NECESSARY. 1. Because it is the great way whereby we can give testimony to the power of the gospel (John xvii. 21-23). There is no oneness but that whereof love is the bond of perfectness, that will give conviction unto the world that God hath sent Christ, for He alone can give it. 2. We have no evidence that we are disciples without it (John xiii. 34-35). 3. This is that in which the communion of saints principally consists. (1) The fountain and spring of this communion is our common participation of one Spirit from the one Head, Jesus Christ. (2) This communion is expressed in the participation of the same ordinances in the same Church. (3) The life and formal reason of this communion is love. Eph. iv. 15-16 is the most glorious description of this communion of saints. It begins in love—"speaking the truth in love;" it ends in love—"edifying itself in love;" it is carried on by love; it is all love. III. CAUTIONS AGAINST ITS HINDRANCES. 1. Take heed of a morose disposition. If it does not hinder some fruits of love, yet it sullies the glory of its exercise. Grace is intended to change our natural temper and make the froward meek, and the passionate patient. 2. Take heed of hindrances which may attend your state and condition. Riches and honour encompass with so many circumstances that it is difficult to break through them to familiarity with the meanest members of the Church. The gospel leaves you your providential advantages, but in things which concern your communion it lays all level (James ii.). We all serve one common Master, who for our sakes became poor. 3. Take heed of satisfying yourselves with the duties of love without looking after the entire working of the grace of love. (*J. Owen, D.D.*) *Charity the bond of perfectness*:—These words come after an exhortation to the practice of the Christian virtues of mercy, &c. In addition to these we are to put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Not perfect bond, but that which renders perfect. Love is that which unites all the others into a complete whole. Another interpretation is to this effect. As in ver. 14, Paul has said in the Church and in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew," &c., he says here that love is the unifying principle which binds together all the otherwise discordant members of the Church. I. LOVE IS USED OF—1. Benevolence to man. 2. God's love to us. 3. Our love to God. 4. Brotherly love among Christians. 5. Love in general as a Christian grace without specification of object. Its characteristics are noted in 1 Cor. xiii. II. OF THIS LOVE IT IS TAUGHT—1. That without this all our passions, professions, hopes, are vain and worthless. No amount of orthodoxy, power, natural or supernatural, devotion, almsgiving, Church membership, assiduity in religious duties, is of any avail. 2. That this love is the fruit of faith. It cannot exist without it, and faith without it is dead. 3. It is the bond of perfectness. (1) It unites all the Christian virtues. (2) It unites all the members of Christ's body. 4. It is the image of God. It makes us like Christ. 5. It is the beauty and blessedness of heaven. Perfection of the religion of the Bible. (1) Not ritualism, benevolence, orthodoxy, but (2) Faith which works by love. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Love the bond of perfectness*:—The Christian is here conceived a cleansed and beautifully-robed man, fitted to enter the presence of the great King. He describes the work which we have to do in order to prepare ourselves for the royal audience. There is an inner cleansing of the heart, the thoughts, the secret springs of our being. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth." There is also a putting off of the old garments of self, pride, and indulgence; the clean spirit cannot do with the foul clothes; and there is the putting on of the new dress—the various garments that compose it are called, "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, and forgiving." These are, as it were, the under-garments; the man is not clothed fit for the presence of the Divine royalty without the robe, worked in graceful colours, made of finest material, hanging in graceful folds, putting the touch of harmony and grace on all the other garments, and being, as it were, "the bond of perfectness," finishing off and perfecting the whole dress. That over-covering, all-hallowing robe is charity; in its adornings, and completings, and harmonisings, being the very "bond of perfectness" to a gracious character. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *Love a perfecting grace*:—Here is an evident allusion to the zone of the orientals, which was generally adorned with jewels and ornaments, and which, by adjusting the folds of the drapery, served at once to give a beautiful form to the human figure, and to unite and perfect the whole dress. The use the apostle here makes of the metaphor is apparent: as the zone was a most material part of the dress, combining and perfecting all, and giving symmetry and

beauty to the form of the person by whom it was worn ; so charity is the best of all the graces, perfecting and combining the whole in beauty and in love. And, like that also, we may remark that it is put on last. Men in general are much more anxious to hate and to destroy than to love and do good ; and even after they seem to have imbibed much of the Christian temper, this sacred bond, this beautiful zone, is long wanting. (*R. Hewlett, D.D.*) *Love the perfection of the Christian character* :—Love is the most potent affection of the human heart. I. IT IS THE PRIME ELEMENT IN EVERY OTHER GRACE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. It is the soul of every virtue, and the guarantee of a genuine sincerity. Without it all the rest are but glittering sins. It is possible to have all those mentioned in ver. 12 ; but without love they would be meaningless, cold, and dead. Mercy would degenerate into sentimentality, kindness into extravagance, humility into mock depreciation, long-suffering into dull, dogged stupidity. II. IT OCCUPIES THE MOST EXALTED PLACE IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. "Above all these things," as the outer garment covers and binds together the rest. III. LOVE IS THE PLEDGE OF PERMANENCY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. As the girdle, or cincture, bound together the loose flowing robes of the ancients, so love is the power that holds together all those graces which together make up perfection. Love is the preservative force in the Christian character. Without it, knowledge would lose its enterprise, mercy and kindness become languid, humility faint, and long-suffering indifferent. Love binds together in a bond which time cannot injure, the enemy unloose, or death destroy. IV. THE PERFECTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER IS SEEN IN THE PRACTICAL MANIFESTATION OF LOVE. "Put on charity." 1. Love is indispensable. It is possible to possess many beautiful traits—much that is humane and aimable—without being a complete Christian : to be very near perfection, and yet lack one thing. Without love all other graces are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. 2. Love is susceptible of individual cultivation. Lessons : 1. The mere profession of Christianity is empty and valueless. 2. Every grace of the Christian character must be diligently exercised. 3. Above and through all other graces love must operate. (*G. Barlow.*) Love is over all, and the bond of perfectness, because—I. IT IS OF GREATER EXTENT THAN ANY OTHER VIRTUE. Mercy and kindness, and humbleness and forgiveness, are separate graces ; but love embraces them all, regards generally our neighbour and those in adversity, our friends and enemies, the good and the bad. II. WITHOUT IT ALL OTHER GRACES ARE VAIN AND DELUSIVE. Mercy without it is weakness ; humility, debasement, meekness, cajolery, and deceit ; patience, stupidity ; forgiveness, hypocrisy ; all is inconsistent, heartless, wayward, selfish. III. IT SUPPLIES THE WANT OR REMEDIES THE DEFECT OF ANY OTHER GRACES AND VIRTUES. For we are always falling short in one or other, from indwelling sin, from temptation, from cast of character, from peculiar circumstances. A sweet charitable temper provides the articles of Christian attire in which we are from time to time most defective, supplies their place, hides their imperfections, remedies the ill effects of their absence. (*Bishop D. Wilson.*) *Love the "finish" of the Christian character* :—When the cutler brings his goods to market, he may have the best of steel in the blade and the best of horn in the handle, and every part may be rivetted strongly ; but if the blade has not been polished, and if there be no finishing work in the handle, he cannot sell his stock. It is just as good for practical purposes as though it were finished ; but people do not want it. They want their blades polished and their handles finished, and they are so used to having goods sand-papered and burnished, that they will not take them unless they are so. There must be art in them. And this is carried so far, that when articles are good for nothing art is put on the outside to make them seem good for something. And men buy things for the sake of their looks. The idea of perfection lies in the direction of the æsthetic ; and as much so in social and moral elements as in physical things. Men are not now finished in any respect in their higher relations. I mean even good men. There are hundreds of men that are in the main laying out their life and character in right directions, and on right foundations ; but how few men know how to be good variously, systematically, gracefully, genially, sweetly, beautifully. (*H. W. Beecher.*) When the apostle speaks so highly of charity, he does not mean to disparage the other graces. They also are most beautiful, considered apart from charity, only charity has such a sun-like excellence, in its presence all star-like beauty, and even moon-like beauty, seem to grow dim and fade away. Compare the diamond with a common wayside stone, and we are not greatly impressed with its superiority ; the contrast is too great. Set it in the royal crown ; encircle it with pearls ; let it

compare with other jewels; with ruby, and garnet, and emerald; then the depth of its crystal purity seems so impressive, and the flashing of its light so exquisite. Set charity alongside "humbleness, bowels of mercies, long-suffering," or forgiving, then it seems to gather up into itself much of the charm and loveliness of such graces, and stands forth in the centre of them all, "the very bond of perfectness." *R. Tuck, B.A.*)

Ver. 15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts.—*The peace of Christ*:—The various reading "peace of Christ" is not only recommended by MS. authority, but has the advantage of bringing the expression into connection with the great words of our Lord, "Peace I leave you," &c. A strange legacy left at a strange moment. It was but an hour or so since He had been "troubled in spirit" as He thought of the betrayer—and in an hour more He would be beneath the olives of Gethsemane; and yet even at such a time He bestows on His friends some share in His deep repose of spirit. Surely the "peace of Christ" must mean what "My peace" meant: not only the peace which He gives, but the peace which lay like a great calm on the sea on His own deep heart, and we must not restrict it to mutual concord. When He gave us His peace He gave us some share in that meek submission of will to His Father's will, and in that stainless purity, which were its chief elements. The hearts and lives of men are made troubled not by circumstances, but by themselves. Whoever can keep his own will in harmony with God's enters into rest. Even if within and without are fightings, there may be a central peace. Christ's peace was the result of the perfect harmony of His nature. All was co-operant to one great purpose; desires and passions did not war with conscience and reason, nor did the flesh lust against the spirit. Though that complete uniting of all our inner selves is not attained on earth, yet its beginnings are given us by Christ, and in Him we may be at peace with ourselves, and have one great ruling power binding all our conflicting desires in one, as the moon draws after her the heaped waters of the sea. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The power of Divine peace*:—The connection between this verse and the foregoing is obvious. The man who has this peace is most likely to cultivate love. Christian calmness is the concomitant and stimulus of Christian affection which is hindered by doubt, anxiety, or fear. **I. THE NATURE AND VALUE OF THIS BLESSING.** 1. It is the highest blessing. It is peace with God and the rest of the soul in Him—the peace which comes from Christ and through Him. In its character it is that which Christ Himself enjoys, and when we have it, with no gloom from the past, no forebodings for the future, no pursuing vengeance and no depressing fear, we stand strong and calm amid the troubles of this world, like the rock unmoved amid the ocean surges. It is a Divine tranquillity which the world cannot take away and no earthly sorrow diminish. 2. It is a present blessing—not one hoped for to be realized by and by. Yet there are many who are in uncertainty about it, and they go about doubting and unhappy. It ought not to be so when Christ gives it freely. Come forth and dwell in the glory of the Divine love and it will flow into the soul. 3. It is a powerful blessing. (1) A power of stimulus. It is the mightiest help on the side of piety, it leads and lifts the soul to Him from whom it comes. (2) A power of defence (Phil. iv. 7). (a) It fortifies against temptation and sin; (b) against infidelity. A Christian may be a poor logician and unacquainted with historical evidences, but if Divine peace rules his heart, he has a stronger defence than reason or learning can supply. (3) A power of control. It is a wise and safe monitor. We are often perplexed as to what is right or wrong in pursuits, amusements, alliances, &c. But if the peace of God is supreme it will settle these moral difficulties at once. (4) A power of concentration. It gathers together all the powers of manhood that they may go forth in obedience to Christ. It enabled Paul, freed as he was by it from all doubts and fears, to say, "This one thing I do." **II. INDUCEMENTS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO ITS REALIZATION.** 1. The Divine call to it—"To which we also are called." They surely forget this who go in doubt or uncertainty. It is God's gracious design that we should have it. The gospel summons us to happiness. "Peace on earth" was the proclamation of the angels. To give it was the mission of Christ, and His promise to the disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me peace." 2. Our condition in this world of turmoil and sin. By it we may be raised above the sorrows and anxieties of time. We can and ought to be calm when other men are agitated—when panic is abroad, credit shaken, commerce paralyzed, the bonds of society loosened, human hopes stricken. 3. The unity of the Church—"in one body." The more we are conscious of it, and let it rule, the more shall we con-

tribute to the manifest oneness of the body of Christ. No strifes and divisions can exist where it reigns. **III. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH IT IS TO BE CHERISHED.** Thankfulness is an habitual exercise of the Christian soul; here it is for peace. And when we think that God has called us to it, and contemplate the way in which it has come to us through the Cross, and estimate its value in this world of sorrow, how profound should be our gratitude. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The ruling peace of Christ*:—The figure is that of the umpire or abitrator at the games who, looking down on the arena, watches that the combatants strive lawfully, and adjudges the prize. The peace of Christ, then, is to sit enthroned as umpire in the heart; or if we might give a mediæval instead of a classical shape to the figure, that fair sovereign, Peace, is to be Queen of the Tournament, and her “eyes rain influence and adjudge the prize.” When contending impulses and reasons distract and seem to pull us in opposite directions, let her settle which is to prevail. We may make a rude test of good and evil by their effects on our inward repose. Whatever mars our tranquillity, ruffling the surface so that Christ’s image is no longer visible, is to be avoided. That stillness of spirit is very sensitive, and shrinks away at the presence of an evil thing. Let it be for us what the barometer is to the sailor, and if it sinks let us be sure that a storm is at hand. There is nothing so precious that it is worth while to lose the peace of Christ for the sake of it. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The peace of God ruling the heart*:—There are here four pieces of advice. **I. POSSESS THE PEACE OF GOD.** Many persons have peace but it is a false peace, the peace of ignorance, stupidity, indifference—the followers of the false prophet who cried “peace, peace,” when there was no peace. Woe to the man whose peace of mind is like the deadly smoothness of the current just as it nears the cataract! The text refers to—1. Peace with God. If you are reconciled through Jesus Christ, don’t act as though it were doubtful (Rom. v. 1). Growing out of this there is peace with God in all His providences which can only come through an entire submission to the Divine will. If thou canst not change thy place change thy mind till thy mind shall love thy place. If forgiven why raise minor points. It is like quarreling on small points of law when the great case has been decided. 2. Peace such as God commends. Perfect peace with Himself and then with all men. What are men’s offences against us compared with those which God has forgiven? And what can men do to us at the worst that we should fear or revenge their injuries? “Peace on earth: good-will toward men.” 3. Peace which God works in the soul. We cannot create this. To take the wild-beast heart out of us and to put a new heart in us is a Divine work. 4. The peace of God—a Hebraism for excellence, as great mountains and trees are called hills and trees of God. It is greater than any other peace. It is the holiest, deepest, one which passeth all understanding, and eternal. **II. LET THIS PEACE RULE IN YOUR HEARTS.** 1. In order to peace there must be a ruler. Those people who are for putting down all governors may bid farewell to peace. The worst king is better than the despotism of the mob, the carnival of misrule wherein every man doth what is right in his own eyes, and all eyes love darkness rather than light. See how it is in a house! Where the head is not the head, the hand is not the hand, and nothing is itself. You must have a governing faculty somewhere; and if nothing governs within your heart the devil governs. 2. It is a blessed gift of grace when the peace of God rules in the heart. If it is in your heart at all, it must rule, for it has power to put down all rebellion. When a riot arises we appeal to the lawful power to come and put down the uproar. So in our hearts we can say to the master principle, the peace of God, “Come, put down my murmuring, arrest this bad temper, help me that I may not break out into anger.” 3. Yield yourself to the blessed umpireship of the peace of God. Resolve to judge all things by it, and do nothing that would upset its government. If you do—say by getting angry—you harm yourself physically, but much more spiritually. In such a case you cannot pray as you did, nor read some scriptures as you did, nor look the Well-beloved in the face and say “I am acting in a way that pleases Him.” It is therefore a serious thing for a believer to break this peace. 4. If a man has this peace he may go down to any meeting, however turbulent—and yet he will be wise to answer and be silent, to do or not to do, for it will keep him quiet. But if his mind be unhinged before the Lord he will be weak as another man, and say and do what he will wish to wipe out with tears. **III. STRENGTHEN YOURSELF BY GOD’S SPIRIT WITH ARGUMENTS.** Remember—1. Only can you be happy in heart and healthy in spirit as long as you keep the peace of God. 2. Only then can the Church prosper. A Church disputing is a Church committing suicide; and most disputes are about little points? 3. Only thus can God be

glorified. If you are always fretting and anxious how can you promote that; or if you are finding fault with everybody. 4. God calls you to this. If you are not a peaceful man you have not inherited your true calling. He called you to be a peacemaker. 5. He calls you in one body. What would you think of the hand if it should say, "I will have no peace with the eye," or the foot if it should say, "I will not carry the heavy body about"? What is to become of the glory of Christ if the members live in contention? IV. OCCUPY YOUR MINDS HEALTHILY—"Be ye thankful." 1. That is the way to keep our peace with God. Bless Him for all your miseries as well as for all your mercies. 2. That is the way to keep our peace with men. Be thankful in the home, society, &c., for benefits received. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Unity and Peace*:—1. It may surprise us to find peace urged as a duty, whereas it seems a matter over which we have no control. But the text proceeds upon the supposition and urges thankfulness for it also. 2. Moreover, remember that these words were written when the apostle lay in prison, expecting a violent death; when false doctrines were rife and religious animosities fierce; and they are part of an eager controversial Epistle. Therefore it is possible to be in the midst of danger, to breathe the atmosphere of religious controversy, and even to be a controversialist, and yet the soul not lose its deep peace. Joined with this is the doctrine of Church unity as its basis. I. THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. 1. Distinguish between the unity of comprehensiveness and that of singularity. The army is one, that is the oneness of unity; the soldier is one, that is the oneness of the unit. The body is a unity of manifold comprehensiveness, a member of a body exhibits a unity of singularity. Without unity peace is impossible. There is no peace in a soldier, but there is in an army; none in a limb, only in a body. In order to have peace you must have a higher unity, and herein consists the unity of God's own being. When the Unitarian speaks of God as one, he means simply singularity of number. We mean that He is of manifold comprehensiveness. "I and My Father are one." 2. Unity subsists between things dissimilar. (1) There is no unity in the separate atoms of a sand-pit; they are things similar. Even if they be hardened into a mass they are only a mass. There is no unity in a flock of sheep; it is simply a repetition of things similar. (2) But a body is made up of dissimilar members and is thus a unity; so that if you strike off from this any one member the unity is destroyed and only a part is left. (3) So with the Church. (a) The unity of its ages is not that every age is the repetition of every other, but that each has put forth its own fragment of truth. In early ages martyrdom proclaimed the eternal sanctity of truth rather than give up which a man must lose his life. This age by its revolutions and socialisms proclaims the brotherhood of man. So that just as every separate ray—violet, blue, and orange—make up the white ray, so these manifold fragments blended make up the perfect white ray of truth. (b) With regard to individuals. At the reformation, *e.g.*, it was given to one to proclaim that salvation is not local; to another, justification by faith; to another, the sovereignty of God; to others, the supremacy of the Scriptures, the right of private judgment, the duty of the individual conscience. (c) So again with regard to Churches. Would we force upon others our Anglicanism? Then in consistency you are bound to demand that in God's world there shall be but one colour, and one note. But the various Churches advance different truths, varieties to be blended in unity. 3. Unity consists in submission to one single influence or spirit. Take away the unifying life of the body, and decomposition begins, the principle of cohesion being gone. We know the power of a single living influence. Take, *e.g.*, the power wherewith the orator holds together a thousand men as if they were one; or that which concentrates the conflicting feelings of a people when the threat of foreign invasion has fused down the edges of variance and makes the classes of this manifold and mighty England one; or the mighty winds which hold together the various atoms of the desert, so that they rush like a living thing across the wilderness. And this is the unity of the Church, the subjection to the one unifying spirit of its God. You cannot produce unity by ecclesiastical discipline, by consenting to some form of expression, such as "Let us agree to differ," by parliamentary enactments. Give us the living Spirit of God and we shall be one. This was exhibited at Pentecost, and may be so again. II. THE INWARD PEACE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH. 1. This peace is when a man is contented with his lot, when the flesh is subdued to the spirit, and when he feels in his heart that all is right. To this we are called, "Come unto Me all ye that labour, &c." 2. This was the dying bequest of Christ; and herein lies the power of Christianity to satisfy the deepest want of man—the repose of acquiescence in the will of God. 3. It is God's peace. God is

rest. The "I am" of God is contrasted with the "I am becoming" of all other things. And this peace arises out of His unity. There is no discord between the powers and attributes of God. 4. It is a living peace, and must be distinguished from the peace of the man who lives for and enjoys self: the peace on the surface of the caverned lake that no wind can stir; that is the peace of stagnation: the peace of the stones which have fallen down the mountain's side; that is the peace of inanity: the peace in the hearts of enemies who lie together on the battle field; their animosity is silenced in death. If ours is the peace of the sensualist, or of inaction, apathy or sin, we may whisper to ourselves "Peace, peace," but there will be no peace. 5. It is the peace which comes from an inward power—"rule." There is no peace except where there is the possibility of the opposite of peace, although now restrained and controlled. You do not speak of the peace of a grain of sand, or of a mere pond, but of the sea, because its opposite is there implied. And we make a great mistake when we say there is strength in passion. If the passions of a man are strong, the man is weak if he cannot control them. The real strength of a man is calmness, the word of Christ saying, "Peace!" and there is "a great calm." 6. It is the peace of reception, but not of inaction. (1) The peace of obedience. Very great is this when a man has his lot fixed, and his mind made up, and sees his destiny before him and acquiesces in it. Deep is the peace of a soldier to whom has been assigned an untenable position, with the command, "Keep that, even if you die," and he obediently remains to die. Great was the peace of Elisha. "Knowest thou," said the excited men around him, "that the Lord will take," &c. "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace." (2) The peace of gratefulness; that peace which Israel had when these words were spoken. "Stand still and see the salvation of God." (F. W. Robertson, M.A.) *The heart controls the life*:—An engine, dragging its train on the rail, is sweeping along the landscape. As it comes near it strikes awe into the spectator. Its furious fire and smoke, its rapid whirling wheels, its mighty mass shaking the ground beneath it, and the stealthy quickness of its approach,—its whole appearance and adjuncts make the observer bate his breath till it is past. What power would suffice to arrest that giant strength. Although a hundred men should stand up before it, or seize its whirling wheels, it would cast them down, and over their mangled bodies hold on its unimpeded course, with nothing to mark the occurrence but a quiver as it cleared the heap. But there is a certain spot in the machinery where the touch of a little child will make the monster slacken his pace, creep gently forward, stand still, slide back, like a spaniel fawning under an angry word at the feet of his master. I find a law in my members that when I would do good evil is present with me. No power in heaven or earth will arrest that downward fall, unless it be laid upon the heart. (W. Arnot, D.D.) *Be ye thankful.—Thankfulness*:—I. THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR. 1. Providential mercies. (1) Your food. (2) Your clothing. (3) Your health. (4) Your learning. (5) Your reason. (6) Your parents, friends, and homes. (7) Deliverance from danger. 2. The means of grace. (1) Your Bible. (2) Your sabbaths. (3) Prayer. (4) Christian companionships. (5) Christian books. 3. Christ and salvation. II. THE WAYS OF SHOWING THANKFULNESS. 1. In word. Thank God—(1) at your meals. (2) In your prayers. (3) In your praises. 2. In deed. (1) By giving of our money. (2) Your time. (3) Yourselves. III. THE SIN OF UNTHANKFULNESS. It is ranked with the vilest sins. (J. H. Wilson, M.A.) *Thankfulness; natural*:—If you consider the universe as one body, you shall find society and conversation to supply the office of the blood and spirits; and it is gratitude that makes them circulate. Look over the whole creation, and you shall see that the band or cement which holds together all the parts of this glorious fabric is gratitude or something like it. You may observe it in all the elements; for does not the air feed the flame, and does not the flame at the same time warm and enlighten the air? Is not the sea always sending forth as well as taking in? And does not the earth quit scores with all the elements, in the noble fruits and productions that issue from it? And in all the light and influence that the heavens bestow on this lower world, though the lower world cannot equal their benefaction, yet, with a kind of grateful return, it reflects those rays that it cannot recompense; so that there is some return, however, although there can be no requital. (R. South, D.D.) *Thankfulness should be practical*:—As physicians judge of the condition of men's hearts by the pulse that beats in their arms and not by the words that proceed from their mouths; so we may judge of the thankfulness of men by their lives rather than by their professions. (E. Foster.) *Gratitude the one thing needed*:—A gentleman in Bombay seeing

an anchorite sitting under a cocoa nut tree, asked for an interest in his prayers. The anchorite replied he would with pleasure grant the request, but he scarce knew what best to ask for him. "I have seen you often," he said, and you appear to have everything you want that can conduce to human happiness; perhaps the best thing I can ask for you will be a grateful heart. (*W. Bazendale.*) *Rest and be thankful*:—There is a picturesque tract of the Western Highlands of Scotland, in passing through which the traveller has to ascend a long winding path, very steep, rough, and lonely, leading up a wild and desolate glen. The savage and awful grandeur of the scenery, with its bare hills and rocks, is hardly equalled in this country. But if the traveller goes up that glen on foot (and it is hardly possible to go up it otherwise), his appreciation of the scene around him is gradually overborne by the sense of pure physical fatigue. Not without a great strain upon limbs and heart, can that rugged way be traversed. At last you reach a ridge, whence the road descends steeply on the other side of the hill. You have ended your climbing, and you may now begin to go down again, from whichever side you come. And there, at this summit, you will find a rude seat of stone, which bears the inscription in deeply-cut letters, "Rest and be thankful." Many weary travellers have rested there: let us trust that a good many have been thankful. We all know that the like name has been given to more than one or two like resting-places, that it is borne by various seats, at the top of various steep ascents in this country. There is something pleasing, and something touching, in the simple natural piety which has dictated the homely name. He was a heathen who said it, but he spoke well who said, Whosoever man feels himself in peace and rest, let him think of God, and give thanks to Him. "Rest and be thankful," says the stone in the Highland glen: "Be ye thankful," says St. Paul to the Christians of Colossæ. It is not said to whom we are to be thankful. There is a touch of natural piety in the fact, that that does not need to be said. That is taken for granted! We all know who it is that is the Giver of all good; and when we are told, generally, to be thankful, of course we know to whom! Resting at the summit of the mountain path, it is not to the man who erected that seat for the weary traveller: though it is fit and right that he should be kindly thought of while we are enjoying the effect of his work, yet we are to look beyond him to a cause above him. He erected that seat, acting (as it were) for God: every mortal who does a kind and good deed, in a right spirit, is acting for God, and in God's name: and he went away when his work was done, asking of the wayfarer, putting his request on record with a pen of iron upon the stone,—that for whatever comfort and rest might be experienced there, the wayfarer might bestow his thanks in the right quarter. And St. Paul does just the same! (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*)

Ver. 16. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.—*The Word of Christ*:—I. WHAT IS IT? The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. 1. Christ is their author. 2. He is their subject-matter—they testify of Him. Christ is the Word, the wisdom of God, the truth; and truth as well as grace came by Him. II. HOW SHALL WE TREAT IT? 1. Let it dwell in us. It must not be as a stranger, or a visitor, or as an acquaintance with whom we are not specially intimate, or as a friend away and seldom seen, but rather as a resident member of our family with whom we are in constant and loving communication. 2. Let it dwell in you. It is not enough that it be in our house, study, pocket, and so at hand. It must be in our heart, pervading our whole spiritual nature, directing and controlling all our life and conduct. "Thy Word have I hid in my heart." "Out of the heart are the issues of life." 3. Let it dwell in you richly, plentifully, profoundly. This implies—(1) An intimate knowledge of the truth. (2) A believing, saving experience of the truth. We should seek to understand it in its inmost compass; in all its bearings and relations, and then gladly receive it, in the love of it, into good and honest hearts (James i. 2). (*T. W. Sydnor.*) *The school of the Word*:—I. THE LESSON-BOOK. The Word of Christ, so called, because—1. He is its central theme. The beginning of the story of the race is told that the first Adam may prepare the way for the second: then the mass of the race is forgotten, and one chosen family selected because Christ was to come out of it. The songs, prophecies, teachings of the Old Testament are full of Christ, and its characters are as fragments of the perfect character of Jesus. The ethics of the book find their full manifestation in Him. The Gospels are biographies of Him, and the Epistles expositions of the truths of that biography. 2. It was originated by Christ. Some write of what they see or hear, but Christ produces the history He causes

to be recorded. He not only breathed His Spirit upon men's minds that they might write its doctrines; He produced the facts which are the basis of the doctrines. Pardon is taught; but He made the atonement by His death. Immortality is taught; but He revealed it first by His resurrection. 3. He dwells in it. Men are in quest of Christ, and seek Him in sacraments and holy things and places. But we have "not to ascend into heaven to bring Him down," &c. "The Word is nigh thee." Christ is in His Word, not as Plato in his republic or Shakespeare in his plays, but as a living and operating power. "My words are spirit, and they are life." 4. Through it He works. There is not a process of grace promised or commended that it does not promote. (1) Conviction of sin. "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light." "The Word is powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword." (2) Conversion. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." (3) Salvation from sin. "Thy Word have I hid in my heart," &c. (4) Edification. "The Word of His grace . . . is able to build you up," &c. (5) All sound Christian profit. "Is profitable for doctrine," &c.

II. THE SCHOOL. 1. The Church generally. Christ appointed the Church to teach His Word, and His Word forms the basis of her creeds, and the final authority when those creeds are questioned. It is to be exalted in her worship, commemorated in her sacraments, and proclaimed and defended in her pulpits. 2. The school of devotion; the prayer-meeting. 3. The school of experience; the class or fellowship-meeting. 4. The school of the family, where children learn theology, and the Divine character and administration, by object-lessons, by what father and mother say and do. 5. But pre-eminently is the Sunday school the school of the Word.

III. THE TEACHER. 1. His qualification. The Word is to dwell in him richly—in his tongue as its expounder; in his memory as a student; in his heart as a believer: so that when he prays he uses it, when he teaches texts come to his tongue-ends, and as he lives he illustrates it. It must so dwell in him that he will delight in it, love to quote it, go to sleep in times of storm resting upon it, and use it in the hour of death as the key to the kingdom.

2. His method. (1) Teaching; (2) admonishing; (3) translating into life. (*Bishop Vincent.*) *The indwelling of the Word:*—There is nothing easier than to hear the Word with a general regard, and few things more difficult than to receive it as a principle of spiritual life. Satan hinders; cumbering with much business, diverting with trifles, or disturbing with wicked imaginations or affections.

I. THE WORD OF CHRIST. 1. In a special and limited sense this is the gospel, because He preached and published it. 2. In a larger sense it is both Testaments, for He is the author of both. 3. Then in listening to Bible teaching we are listening to Christ Himself. "The Word" is one of His titles, and He would have us honour it by honouring the Scriptures which testify of Him. 4. It is sometimes called the Word of the Kingdom, because it shows the way to the kingdom of grace, that we may be partakers of the kingdom of glory; "the Word of life," because the instrument of regeneration and spiritual sustentation. 5. But though necessary, how many unnecessary things are preferred before it. It is the polar star which shines out in the spiritual firmament to point you to Christ; and yet in how many instances is the glimmering taper of human reason preferred! It opens a well of life; yet many choose the broken cistern.

II. ITS DWELLING-PLACE. 1. It is to dwell. (1) This points out a contrast between a settled and vagrant life. With the mere wanderer we hold little in common: the resident is well known. As you give yourself up to the study of the sacred oracles, the mind of the Spirit becomes imparted to your own. (2) This is an allusion to God's "dwelling" in the Holy of Holies. Christ's Word is to be as the Shekinah.

2. It is to dwell within: not in the understanding merely to enlighten it, nor in the judgment to inform and convince it, but to be deeply seated and treasured up in the heart.

"I will write My law in their inward parts," &c. And unless it is so written it is quite certain that we have no interest in the covenant. (1) It is to dwell there as a man dwells in his own house, which he is proud of calling his castle, and which is not as a temporary tent. "If ye continue in My Word," &c. How many there are who give it only the entertainment of a wayfaring man who obtains with difficulty a lodging for the night, and in the morning is gone. (2) In order thus to dwell it must be mixed with faith. Without faith it may produce various effects: it may make you, like Herod, "do many things," and induce you, like Felix, "to hear Paul gladly"; it may produce feelings of wonder, &c.; but it is only when received in faith that it can really profit.

III. THE MEASURE IN WHICH IT IS TO DWELL IN US. 1. Richly: not as a scanty stream, but as a full

flowing river. You are not to be content with partial views of God's truth. The whole written Word is the soul's pasturage. "All Scripture . . . is profitable." "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word," &c. 2. This requires prayerful searching, and much more than reading in haste a chapter in the morning or at night. We do not search after worldly wealth so. 3. This rich indwelling will be fruitful in (1) comfort; (2) holiness; (3) revived spiritual life. (T. Watson, B.A.) *The indwelling Word of Christ*.—1. This exhortation is connected with the exhortation out of which it springs (vers. 14-15); and with the outward expression in which it finds vent (ver. 16). 2. The Word of Christ is not His personal teaching merely, but the whole Bible as His present Word, affording the materials of present speech. 3. Its indwelling is personal, and is not to be evaporated, as if it referred to the Church collective (Rom. viii. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. iii. 17; 2 Tim. i. 5, 14). I. LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU. 1. This implies a sense of the preciousness of Christ Himself realized by faith. (1) No one's word will be precious to you unless he is precious whose word it is. The word of one you dislike will be contemptuously rejected; the word of one who is an object of indifference will pass swiftly by you. (2) How much of the Word of Christ may be missed unless He is precious. In many parts you think that He is only dimly and distantly to be found, and even passages fullest of Him do not bring Him as speaking personally to you. But it is only as it does that that the Bible is the Word of Christ. A friend's letter is his word to me when by means of it I call him up before me in his own loved person speaking to me. Then it dwells in me. Thus, through my love to Him and His preciousness to me, Scriptures which seem to have little to do with Him may become His Word to me. 2. The preciousness of Christ's Word, as well as of Christ Himself, is essential to its dwelling in you. (1) If Christ is precious, His Word must be precious. The word of a precious friend is precious even before you know what it contains. Its very outside is welcome. But it becomes more so as you study it, and especially if it be of real value. (2) Most Christians can name a text apparently having little to do with Christ, which has become, nevertheless, one of His best remembrancers. It is connected with some marked crisis; as a whisper of consolation, a breath of pity in sinfulness, felt as the Word of Christ just then wanted. (3) The way of finding Christ all through the Bible is not merely to get it to speak of Christ, but to get Christ to speak to you about it; and so to make it all His, i.e., let it all, every bit and fragment of it, be welded into your experience, with Christ living in you the hope of glory. (4) This may be by the Spirit being given in answer to the prayer of faith. He teaches you all things as said by Christ. Do not force it to tell of Christ formally, so as to offend critics and offend ordinary readers. Take it in its plain meaning, but expect that Christ in it may have some lesson to teach; some comfort to impart; some rebuke to administer. 3. The felt preciousness of real present and living intercourse between Christ and you will cause the Word, as His, to abide in you. (1) That Word sustains the intercourse, and is for colloquial uses. You are to dwell in Christ and He in you, but communion cannot long be maintained without language. We may dream of this mutual indwelling after some vague, sleepy fashion; but if it is to be more than a dream there must be talk between us. He Himself deals with this subject (John xv. 7; xvi. 23). This can only be realized by the Comforter "bringing to remembrance whatsoever He hath said unto you." His Word, then, must be the staple of the verbal intercourse. He uses it in speaking to you, and you in speaking to Him. (2) Thus used, it will dwell. Otherwise, while whole strings of texts or chapters may be retained in the memory, and may be glibly quoted, the virtue will be gone out of them. If you would have the Word to abide in you as the precious Word of a precious Saviour, you must always turn it to account in fellowship with Him. II. RICHLY. 1. In quantity. Let the mind and soul be richly stored. Ah! how much there is of the Bible that does not dwell in you because you do not realize it as the Word of Christ; whole chapters that have not been linked to any gracious dealing of Christ. 2. In quality. (1) A rich manure is one that enriches the soil; and it dwells in the soil richly in proportion as it enriches it, turning its hard, dry sterility into fruitful mould. So let the Word of Christ dwell in you as to enrich your souls. (2) But it must be as the Word of Christ. For such is the poverty and perversity of the soil, that otherwise even the Word will, instead of enriching the soul, become partaker of its deadness, and end in being as salt which has lost its savour. The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life, making it truly the living Word of a living Christ. (3)

And how penetrating, as well as powerful, should be its virtue. It should reach to every nook of your life. 3. In correspondence to the riches of Him whose Word it is. Riches of goodness, glory, wisdom, knowledge, grace; unsearchable riches of Christ. 4. It is to dwell in you, not only as rich receivers, but dispensers. "Freely ye have received, freely give." You are to be richly productive, fruit-bearing, in faith, in good works. 5. Notice the social bearing of the precept as embedded in the context (vers. 12-15 on the one hand, and ver. 16 on the other). In either view this indwelling is not to be like a mass of dead matter crammed into a dead receptacle; as bales are packed in a warehouse, or loads of unread learning are crowded on library shelves for show. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth, the life, the hand must speak. (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) *Indwelling of the Word of Christ*.—I. THE WORD OF CHRIST. 1. The literal Word of Christ is one of the most wonderful things that ever has been in the world. Not from Roman rostrum, nor in terms of Greek philosophy, nor as a Jewish rabbi, but simply and naturally to simple and ordinary men wherever they could be got together, and as He spake the words seem to root themselves in the heart, and grew a living force in the life of the nation. Then came the alternative that He must keep silence or die; but He went on speaking till He said, "It is finished." Immediately on His resurrection He began to speak, and when He went away He left nothing behind Him but His Word. At that time His life and death were unknown powers, and He did not leave the least written explanation of them, nor were the Gospels in existence at the time of this Epistle; but there was the Word of Christ in its newness and energy. 2. Whether or not that Word would have lived without a literary embodiment we are not required to settle. For evidently it was Christ's purpose to condense His living speech into writings for the instruction of men. And there is clear reference here to the written as well as the spoken Word. Thus the phrase takes its most comprehensive sense—the gospel—all that is revealed of God for human salvation. 3. Manifestly all this lies solely in the Scriptures. There is authoritative Word of Christ for us nowhere else. But here the Book is all His. He has fulfilled it, explained it, inspired it, made it a living Word from first to last, that He might by His Spirit give it living and blessed applications. II. ITS INDWELLING. Yield yourselves up as sacred dwellings to be occupied with it. 1. This means that other tenants are not to remain unless in full agreement with this chief dweller. Thoughts and words of men, plans of earthly ambition, pleasures of sin—away! All thoughts are to be ruled, all cares hallowed by it, and all enjoyments made safe and good. It must be this much, or it can be nothing vital. Christ's Word in the morning, selfish prudence all through the day; Christ's Word for religious service, the word of man for the mercantile transaction; Christ's Word for sickness and death, other words for times of health and pleasure; will not do. The tenant will only occupy as sole possessor of the tenement. 2. Let it dwell. There is plenty of it to fill the wonderful house. (1) Down to the deepest base of life it will go, where passions lurk, and flowing round and through them, it will purge away what is unhallowed, leaving only wholesome forces to strengthen and perfect character. (2) Into the rooms that lie more open to common day, and more level with the world, where many busy feet come and go—where knowledge gathers her stores, prudence holds her scales, judgment records her decisions, diligence plies her tasks, acquisition counts her gains, and foresight watches the opening future; into all these the living Word will enter, and at her ingress the darkening shadow melts, the wrinkles of care are smoothed, and slippery things cease their blandishments, and injustice and unkindness hide their heads. (3) Up higher yet, where imagination lights her lamp, and invention stirs her fires, and desire bends the knee, looking upward, and hope sits watching with nothing between her and the stars. 3. Richly—in its best forms and sweetest fragrance, with all its luminous, guiding powers. Fill yourselves with it. Open all the doors, fling wide the windows. You have only to do that. You have not to make the Word: it is nigh thee in thy heart and in thy mouth if thou wilt but let it dwell in thee richly. 4. But here is more than a mere passive allowance. There is a direct appeal to the will and to the activity of the mind. The Word, abundant as it is, will not come to dwell at all without consent and careful and diligent endeavour. Much "wisdom" is needed for the due remembrance and seasonable entertainment of the various parts in order to apply it to meet the wants of life as they arise. In this every man must be his own minister. We do not need the whole Bible every day; we need it as we need corn

in the granary, as the lamps by night. There is many a passage in reserve. We glance at them to-day with only a general interest, but the day will come when they will be as thousands of gold and silver. Meantime it is a great matter to know what is daily bread for this day. (1) Am I in the dark about myself, about the world? Then it will be wise to let the Word of Christ dwell in me as a revelation. (2) Am I doubting and desponding, finding few signs of grace? Then let me remember the Word of Christ as a word of assured salvation, saving the eyes from tears, the feet from falling, and the soul from death. (3) Am I, though calmed with forgiveness, very weak, and unfit for continuing the struggle of the nobler life? Then let me take some strong promise, adapted to the need, and drink it up as a fainting man would drink a cordial until I am refreshed. (4) Am I sorrowing? Can I forget "Let not your heart be troubled." (5) Am I passing away from earth and time? More than ever do I need to take Him at His word: "I will not leave nor forsake." III. THE OUTFLOW. One of the divinest and most necessary truths is that we must give in order to have. The Word of Christ, in order to secure continuance, must be always leaving us. Go among the mountains, and you will see that it is the living stream that flows away; and where it flows the grass is green, and the flowers bloom, and the cattle drink, and the children linger to dip the foot and hear the song. Yet the spring is in no way exhausted. It is fed by the drawing sun, the condensing mountains, the bountiful clouds, the wide sea. Let your inner life, nourished by the indwelling Word, have not ostentatious and noisy, but natural and continuous expression. Its light will come to you from the land of lights. So will you draw from the infinite ocean of Divine love (see vers. 16, 17). A beautiful life; a life of poetry and heart music; a life, too, open alike to all. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.—I. THE PSALMS of the Old Testament have no single and universally accepted designation in the Hebrew Scriptures. They first obtained such in the Septuagint. Psalm comes from a word signifying properly a touching, and then a touching of a stringed instrument with a plectrum, and next the instrument itself, and lastly the song sung with this musical accompaniment. It was in this latest stage that the word was adopted by the Septuagint, and to this agree the ecclesiastical definitions of it. In all probability the word here and in Eph. v. 19 refers to the inspired Psalms of the Hebrew canon, and certainly designates these on all other occasions where it is met with in the New Testament, with the doubtful exception of 1 Cor. xiv. 16. The psalms, then, which the apostle would have the faithful to sing to one another are those of David, Asaph, and the other sweet singers of Israel. II. HYMNS. While the "psalm" by right of primogeniture, as at once the oldest and most venerable, occupies the foremost place, the Church of Christ does not restrict herself to such, but claims the freedom of bringing new things as well as old out of her treasures house, a new salvation demanding a new song. It was the essence of a Greek "hymn" that it should be addressed to, or be in praise of a god or a hero, *i.e.*, a deified man, as Callisthenes reminded Alexander, who, claiming hymns for himself, or suffering them to be addressed to him, implicitly accepted divine honours. In the gradual breaking down of the distinction between the human and the divine which marked the fallen days of Greece and Rome, with the usurping on the part of men of divine honours, the hymn came more and more to be applied to men; although this was not without remonstrance. When the word was assumed into the language of the Church, this essential distinction clung to it still. A "psalm" might be a *De profundis*, the story of man's deliverance, or a commemoration of mercies received; and of a "spiritual song" much the same could be said; a "hymn" must always be more or less of a *Magnificat*, a direct address of praise and glory to God. Augustine in more places than one states the essentials of a hymn. 1. It must be sung. 2. It must be praise. 3. It must be to God. But though "hymn" was a word freely adopted in the fourth century, it nowhere occurs in the early Fathers, probably because it was so steeped in heathenism, so linked with profane associations, there were so many hymns to Zeus, Hermes, Aphrodite, &c., that the early Christians shrank from it. We may confidently assume that the hymns referred to in the text were direct addresses to God, such as Luke i. 46-55, 68-79; Acts iv. 24, and that which Paul and Silas sang in the Philippian dungeon (Acts xvi. 25). How noble, how magnificent uninspired hymns could prove we have evidence in the *Te Deum*, in the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and in many a later heritage which the Church has acquired. That the Church, brought at the time when St. Paul wrote into a new and marvellous world of realities, would be rich in these we might be sure, even if no evidence existed to this effect. Of such

evidence, however, there is abundance (Eph. v. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Tim. ii. 11-14). And as it was quite impossible that the Church, releasing itself from the Jewish synagogue, should fall into the same mistake as some portions of the Reformed Church, we may be sure that it adopted into liturgic use, not psalms only, but also hymns, singing them to Christ as God (Pliny, Ep. x. 96); though this we may conclude, more largely in Churches gathered out of the heathen world than in those wherein a strong Jewish element existed. III. SPIRITUAL SONGS. 'Ode' is the only word of this group which the Apocalypse knows (v. 9, xiv. 3, xv. 3). St. Paul, on the two occasions when he employs it, adds "spiritual" to it, and this, no doubt, because "Ode" by itself might mean any kind of song, as of battle, of harvest, or festal, or hymeneal, while "psalm," from its Hebrew use, and "hymn," from its Greek, did not need such qualification. The epithet thus applied does not affirm that these odes were Divinely inspired, any more than the spiritual man is an inspired man (1 Cor. iii. 1; Gal. vi. 1), but only that they were such as were composed by spiritual men, and moved in the sphere of spiritual things. How are we, then, to distinguish these from the former two. If "psalms" represent the heritage of sacred song derived by the Christian Church from the Jewish, the "hymns and spiritual songs" will cover what further in the same kind it produced out of its own bosom; but with a difference. What the hymns were we have seen; but Christian thought and feeling will soon have expanded into a wider range of poetic utterances than those in which there is a direct address to the Deity. If we turn, e.g., to Herbert's *Temple*, or Keble's *Christian Year*, there are many poems in both, which, as certainly they are not "psalms," so as little do they possess the characteristics of hymns. "Spiritual songs" these might be fitly called; even as in almost all our collections of so-called "hymns" there are not a few which by much juster title would bear this name. (Archbishop Trench.) *The poets of the New Testament*:—I. THE EXTENT OF THE POETIC ENDOWMENT IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCHES. That it was extensively bestowed we may conceive—1. From the frequent reference made to it (1 Cor. xiv. 26). In Corinth it was valued as a charismata (see also Eph. v. 19; James v. 13). 2. From the universality of the preternatural endowment. The gift of the Spirit was generally bestowed, and this would rouse the poetic faculty in all who had it, and consecrate it to sacred uses. 3. From the universality of excited feelings in the apostolic Churches. Most of those who embraced religion were subject to extraordinary excitement, and poetry is the language of excited feelings. To the unconverted this inspiration was madness or intoxication. II. ITS CHARACTER. Poetical productions have a character. They are fruitful or barren, corrupt or chaste. There is much in our great poets repugnant to our sense of propriety and which we would fain suppress; but the mere fact that these early Christian poets were under the power of the Spirit would show that their poetry must have been high and pure. There are three things which determine the value of poetry. 1. Intellectual merit. This was high with the primitive Christians. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." Christian truth is calculated to incite the highest feelings of the soul, and these lofty emotions would find utterance in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." The profoundest feelings of our nature can only be expressed in poetry. The highest strains of the orator are poetical. 2. Moral purity. "Admonishing one another." This implies a deep concern for each other's moral welfare. The basis of this concern is personal morality, and issued in strains that were morally improving. 3. Poetic conception. The ideas of the primitive Christians were imaginative and creative. III. ITS UTILITY. Every Divine gift is bestowed for a useful purpose. What is the use of this? 1. For personal enjoyment. The true poet lives in a creation of his own, and in the deepest solitude he communes with the infinite source of light, life, love, and beauty. "Poetry," said Coleridge, "has been to me its own exceeding great reward. It has soothed my affliction, it has endeared solitude, and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and beautiful in all that surrounds me." 2. As an element in public worship. Nothing adorns, enlivens, and augments the interest of public worship more than music. It secures the harmony of hearts as well as of voices. 3. It is of social utility. Poetry has exercised a powerful influence on society in all ages, for consolation, inspiration, &c. (P. L. Davies, M.A.) *The service of song*:—I. THE DUTY. 1. Singing is God's ordinance, binding all sorts of men (Eph. vi. 19; James v. 13; Ps. lxxvi. 1-2, cxii. 1, cxxxv. 3). This is a part of our piety, and is a most comely thing. 2. A Christian should recreate himself chiefly this way (James v. 13). God does not allow us to shoulder out this with other recreations. 3. We should sing in our houses as well

as in our Churches. (1) For daily exercise (Psa. ci. 1-2). (2) When Christians meet together (1 Cor. xiv. 26; Eph. v. 19). II. THE MANNER. 1. We should teach and admonish by singing, and that—(1) ourselves, by considering the matter. (2) Others, as ministers in appointing hymns for the congregation, or masters of the family, or when Christians meet, there should be choice of such psalms as may comfort or rebuke according to occasion (1 Cor. xiv. 26). 2. We must sing with grace. This is diversely interpreted; some understand it of the dexterity that should be used in singing; others of the comeliness, right order, reverence, or delight of the heart; others of thanksgiving. But I think that to sing with grace is to exercise the graces of the heart in singing, *i.e.*, with holy joy (Psa. ix. 2); trust in God's mercies (Psa. xiii. 5); a holy commemoration of God's benefits (Psa. xlvii. 6); yea, with the desire of our hearts that our singing may be acceptable (Psa. civ. 33-34). 3. We must sing with our hearts, not with our tongues only for ostentation. To sing with the heart is to sing with the understanding (Psa. xlvii. 7; 1 Cor. xiv. 14), with sense and feeling. Hence we are said to prepare our hearts before we sing (Psa. lvii. 7). Then we must sing earnestly and awake out of our lethargy (Psa. lvii. 8). 4. We must sing to the Lord (Eph. v. 19), both to God's glory and with a sense of His presence, and upon a holy remembrance of His blessings. III. THE USES. 1. For instruction. When we are merry to sing psalms (James v. 13), yea, to account this a heavenly melody (Eph. v. 19). 2. For reproof of such as delight in profane songs. (*N. Byfield.*) *The conditions of the service of song*.—I. Psalms, &c., must be SPIRITUAL. 1. As to the origin. As Moses, David, and others under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, composed their psalms, &c., so we, whether we sing the same or others, ought to do it under the same direction (Eph. v. 18, 19). 2. As to matter: they treat of spiritual things, relating to the glory of God and our salvation; not of secular and vain matters. II. THEY MUST BE SUNG WITH GRACE. 1. With gratitude. The word sometimes means this (1 Cor. xv. 57; 2 Cor. ii. 14). Gratitude is not improperly joined to songs; because we are moved to sing in joyous and prosperous circumstances, in which condition thankfulness is binding and necessary. 2. With gracious affability, which conveys both pleasure and utility to the hearers; so that what Horace says concerning poets may be said of these spiritual songs. "They would both profit and delight." So the word means in chap. iv. 6, and Eph. iv. 29. III. THEY MUST BE SUNG IN THE HEART, *i.e.*, from the inmost affection. And rightly is an ardent emotion required, for the action of singing declares the inward exultation of the heart. He therefore acts the hypocrite who sings with the heart asleep. Hence David not only tunes his voice to the harp, but his voice before either (Psa. lvii. 7-8). So Mary (Luke i. 46-47). Do not think one thing and sing another. IV. THEY MUST BE SUNG UNTO THE LORD. The songs of Christians ought not to aim at promoting dissoluteness or gain; but to be employed in celebrating the praises of the Redeemer. Corollaries: 1. The custom of singing is useful, and is to be adopted in the assembling of Christians, as well in public as in private. 2. It is so to be performed, that they who hear may from thence derive spiritual pleasure and edification. Therefore farewell to all nugatory, and much more to impure songs. 3. In singing it ought to be our especial care that the heart be affected; they who neglect this, may perhaps please men by an artificial sweetness of voice, but they will displease God by an odious impurity of heart. 4. What things are done for cheerfulness and relaxation of the mind by Christians, ought to be of such a kind as are agreeable to Christ and religion: we must therefore detest the madness of those who cannot be cheerful without the reproach of Christ and the ridicule of religion. (*Bp. Davenant.*) *The service of song a means of Christian edification*.—Whenever a great quickening of religious life comes, a great burst of Christian song comes with it. The mediæval Latin hymns cluster round the early pure days of the monastic orders; Luther's rough stormy hymns were as powerful as his treatises; the mystic tenderness and rapture of Charles Wesley have become the possession of the whole Church. The early hymns were of a dogmatic character. No doubt just as in many a missionary Church a hymn is found to be the best vehicle for conveying the truth, so it was in these early Churches, which were made up largely of slaves and women—both uneducated. "Singing the gospel" is a very old invention though the name be new. In these early communities Paul said, "Every one of you hath a psalm, a doctrine." If a man had some fragment of an old psalm, or some strain that had come fresh from the Christian heart, he might sing it, and his brethren would listen. We do not have

that sort of psalmody now. But what a long way we have travelled from it to a modern congregation, standing with books that they scarcely look at, and "worshipping" in a hymn which half of them do not open their mouths to sing at all, and the other half do in a voice inaudible three pews off. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The hymnology of the Church* has from the first been a most important element in her holy progress and means of usefulness. A large part of the Bible is poetry. Instruction thus conveyed aids the memory and makes a greater impression on the mind. How constantly did David find relief in expressing his hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows in song; and in the record of his experience how precious is the boon he has left for the instruction and encouragement of God's children in all ages. There was a special impressiveness in the use of psalms and hymns in the early Church. The first forms of literature in every country and in great national movements are for the most part in song. Thus it was in Greece; thus it was in Scotland. Facts of history, deeds of prowess, wonderful providences, are handed down in song, and are in this form better remembered and more easily preserved. In our own day, with the power of the printing press, this may not be so necessary; but when books had to be copied in MS., and books were scanty, the citation of song and psalm formed an important element of instruction. It has been said, by a well-known author, that if he were allowed to make the songs of a nation, he cared not who made the laws. The hymns of the Church have often been as the very shrine of spiritual life, for the preservation of doctrine, and the means of progress. How many cares have been relieved by some well-known hymn? How many Christians have crossed the river strong in the faith with the words of some precious stanza on their tongues which they learnt in the Sunday school? (*J. Spence, D.D.*) Singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord.—Phrygia was proverbially a land of music. A music of wild excitement was used in the worship of Cybele, and of Salazion, the Phrygian Dionysos. Hence St. Paul might be the more anxious that Christian singing should be sweet and graceful in a Phrygian Church. For a deep feeling of anxiety on the part of a ruler in the ancient Church that sacred song should be beautiful, see the story how Ignatius brought back the melody of angels heard in vision to his Church at Antioch (Socrates, Hist. vi. 8). Heartfelt singing is not voiceless singing (Psa. cxi. 1). The Psalmist's praise was in his heart, but it must have been vocal also, for it was such praise as is offered in the "assembly." The three conditions of sacred song are sweetness of vocal expression, fulness of inward devotion, direction to a Divine object. These are expressed in this clause.

(1) As to outward expression—"gracefully, sweetly, so as to give pleasure and be attractive." (2) As to inward devotion—"heartfelt." (3) As to the Being addressed—"to the Lord." The clue to the real meaning of the passage is to bear in mind that the apostle is speaking of singing as a Church duty, a part of the Church's corporate life, a declaration of peace among her children, and a means of edification. The recognition of sweetness and pleasingness as an element of public worship is very interesting and important. Such care for singing, again, is quite of a piece with Paul's high ideal of womanly grace and beauty in youth (1 Cor. xi. 15), priestlike dignity in age (Titus ii. 3), with his recognition of things "lovely" (Phil. iv. 3), with his appeal to primary æsthetic instincts (1 Cor. xi. 13), with his horror of "confusion" in public worship (1 Cor. xiv. 33), with the word for a grave and majestic beauty in public service expressed in that great foundation-rubric (1 Cor. xiv. 40). It shows how thoughtfully he considered local circumstances, and adapted his lessons to them. Phrygian music was apt to become the accompaniment of the passionate and unmanly wailing of Asian barbarism. As Plato says, "The Phrygian strain was adapted for sacred rites and fanatical excitement, being of almost frenzied wildness." (*Bp. Alexander.*)

Power of a hymn.—On one of the days when President Garfield lay dying at the seaside, he was a little better, and was permitted to sit by the window, while Mrs. Garfield was in the adjoining room. Love, hope, and gratitude filled her heart as she sang the hymn commencing "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah!" As the soft and plaintive notes floated into the sick chamber, the President turned his eyes up to Dr. Bliss, and asked, "Is that Crete?" "Yes," replied the doctor; "it is Mrs. Garfield." "Quick, open the door a little," anxiously responded the sick man. Dr. Bliss opened the door, and after listening a few moments Mr. Garfield exclaimed, as the large tears coursed down his sunken cheeks, "Glorious, Bliss, isn't it?" (*W. Baxendale.*)

Power of a hymn.—A little boy came to one of our city missionaries, and holding out a dirty and well-worn bit of printed paper, said, "Please, sir, father sent me to get a clean paper like that." Taking it from his hand the missionary

found it was a bill with the hymn "Just as I am" printed upon it. He looked down into the little earnest face and asked the boy where he got it, and why he wanted a clean copy. "We found it, sir, in sister's pocket after she died; and she used to sing it all the time she was sick, and loved it so much that father wanted to get a clean one to put in a frame to hang up. Won't you give us one, sir?" (*G. F. Pentecost, D.D.*) *Saved by a hymn*:—On board the ill-fated steamer *Seawanaka* was one of the Fisk University singers. Before leaving the burning steamer and committing himself to the merciless waves, he carefully fastened upon himself and his wife life preservers. Some one cruelly dragged away that of his wife, leaving her without hope, except as she could cling to her husband. This she did, placing her hands firmly on his shoulders, and resting there until, her strength becoming exhausted, she said, "I can hold on no longer!" "Try a little longer," was the response of the wearied and agonized husband, "let us sing 'Rock of Ages.'" And as the sweet strains floated over the troubled waters, reaching the ears of the sinking and dying, little did they know, those sweet singers of Israel, whom they comforted. But, lo! as they sang, one after another of the exhausted ones were seen raising their heads above the overwhelming waves, joining with a last effort in the sweet, dying, pleading prayer, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," &c. With the song seemed to come strength; another and yet another was encouraged to renewed effort. Soon in the distance a boat was seen approaching! Could they hold out a little longer? Singing still, they tried, and soon with superhuman strength laid hold of the lifeboat, upon which they were borne in safety to land. This is no fiction; it was related by the singer himself, who said he believed Toplady's sweet "Rock of Ages" saved many another besides himself and wife. And this was only salvation from temporal death! But, methinks, from the bright world yonder the good Toplady must be rejoicing that God ever taught him to write that hymn, which has helped to save so many from eternal death, as, catching its spirit, they have learned to cast themselves alone for help on that dear "Rock of Ages,"—cleft, sinner, for them, for you, and for me, and which ever stands rent asunder that it may shelter those who utter the cry, "Let me hide myself in Thee." (*Canadian Baptist*).

Ver. 17. *Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.—Method and music, or the art of holy and happy living*:—It is always an advantage to have the laws of a kingdom as concise as possible. The amount of litigation caused by the English code is immense. In God's government the matter is plain enough—included in ten commandments, and further reduced by Christ to two. Our text is an instance of the terseness of Divine precepts. It contains a law applicable to every action, word, thought, place, circumstance in a few brief words. It is a great advantage to a mechanic to be able to carry with him a pocket rule or square. And so we have here a compendious rule in life which can never fail. I. HOLY WALKING DESCRIBED. "Whatsoever," &c. This rule applies to those who are in Christ. The unconverted require a radical change before they can carry it out. You cannot walk as a believer if you have not believed. But having begun at the beginning, and taken the step of salvation by faith, the walk has to be carried on by following this injunction, which means—1. To do all through the office and name of Christ as Mediator. (1) You are bound to offer daily praise: it must be in the name of the Lord Jesus. (2) You are to abound in prayer. His name gives power to prayer; it is not so much your earnestness and sincerity, but His blood that speaks to God. (3) You are to give Him your time and services in teaching the ignorant, &c.; they can only be acceptable in Him. (4) You are to give of your substance; if you give all your wealth, the offering presented without Christ is nothing. 2. Do all under the authority of Jesus Christ. He is your King. The business of a Christian upon earth is not an independent one; he is a steward for Christ. 3. Do all under the sanction of Christ as our example. It is an admirable course to ask, "What would Christ have done in these circumstances?" 4. Do all as to the glory of Christ. The Christian must not seek self. 5. Do all in the strength of Christ. With Him is the residue of the Spirit, and the Spirit is the believer's power. These words are a rebuke—(1) to those who do nothing in Christ's name; (2) to those who glory in the name of men, as of churches or of saints; (3) to those professors who dishonour the name under which they profess to live. We have—II. HOLY MUSIC PRESCRIBED—"Giving thanks," &c. Soldiers march to battle to trumpet and drum, &c., and it is an excellent thing when Christian men know how to sing as well as work. The best music consists in thankfulness to God.

We ought to praise Him in all things, but more particularly in the exercise of religion. Some people are so afraid of joy, that they seem to labour under the delusion that all who are devout must be unhappy. The text tells us under what aspect we should regard God when thus thanking Him. It is as a Father. III. HOLY MOTIVES INCULCATED. Inscribed on our hearts are reasons which must secure obedience. These are—1. Gratitude. All we have has been received from the Father through Christ. 2. The worthiness of Christ. "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour." 3. Love. He claims our love, and He gives us His. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Suggestive summary of Christian duty*:—I. THE GUIDING LAW OF CHRISTIAN DUTY. "Do all in the name," &c. In Christ is—1. The purest motive to duty. Motive originates and governs action, and makes it good or bad. It is only in Christ we find the holiest and purest motive; in Him love takes the place of selfishness (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). 2. The noblest pattern of duty. 3. The highest end of duty. He is the goal towards which all actions tend. There is no higher name for it—"is above every name." 4. The final authority of duty. II. ITS UNIVERSAL OBLIGATION—"Whatsoever ye do," &c. There must be—1. A recognition of Christ in everything. 2. Absolute dependence on Christ at all times. 3. Supreme devotion to Christ. III. ITS UNVARYING SPIRIT—"Giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Lessons: 1. The name of Christ is the greatest power in the universe. 2. All duty gathers its significance and blessedness from its relation to Christ. 3. A thankful spirit is happy in enterprise, brave in difficulties, and patient in reverses. (G. Barlow.) *Godly living*:—This was applied to the "elect of God" v. 12. This is the title given by the apostle to Christians. A course of action is appointed for them to carry out. I. WHAT IS TO BE DONE? "Do all." The "all" refers to every act of religious life. There is to be—(1) Humbleness of mind; (2) longsuffering; (3) meekness; above all (4) charity. The word of Christ must dwell richly in the heart (see previous verse). II. HOW IT IS TO BE CARRIED OUT—"In the name of the Lord Jesus." This implies three things. 1. By the authority of Christ (Acts iii. 6). 2. For the sake of Christ (Mark ix. 41). 3. For the glory of Christ (Acts xv. 26). (Preacher's Analyst.) *The motive power of a holy life*:—This is one of the bold sweeping statements of Scripture. However extraordinary and extravagant, it is in keeping with the whole spirit of Christianity. Unlike other religions, that of Christ admits of no compromises. It will have all or nothing, the first place or none. The author of nature and the author of Christianity give tokens of being one and the same, in that their principles are alike simple, universal, imperious, inexorable. In both is the same quiet exertion of power, the same calm majesty of law, and the laws of each can never be trifled with with impunity. The law of gravity does not admit of dispute, neither does the law that eternal life is to be found through the Son of God. Observe—I. THE EXTREME BREADTH AND LOFTY SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN DUTY. "Whatsoever," &c. These words cover the whole sphere of Christian activity. Our words, thoughts, desires, labours, &c., are to be under the habitual influence of a sacred and sanctifying power which lies lurking in the name of the Lord Jesus. There are one or two simple explanations which show that there is no real extravagance in this large demand. 1. If the Christian law is just another name for the law of truth, love, and holiness, it is quite clear that we shall never get out of the range of that law, neither in this world nor the next. Not more certainly does the law of gravity reach from world to world than does this law prevail wherever intelligence exists. 2. If religion consists in entering the service of a God who looks not on the outward appearance but on the heart, that religion will be the only true one which produces right dispositions towards Him of faithfulness in all things, the smallest as well as the biggest. The spirit we are of determines the character of our actions whether they are holy or unholy. The life of the saint and of the sinner are made up very much of the same commonplace duties, and in all that is patent to the world there may be little difference between them: but the spirit by which they are actuated constitutes a gulf between them as wide as that which divides light and darkness, heaven and hell. 3. It were well for the Church and the world if we recognized more clearly this breadth of Christian duty. There is no act, however little, which Christ does not see and touch, and which may not tend as much to His honour as the songs of the Seraphim; there is no affection, talent, energy on which He does not put His hand and say, "That is mine," and which may not be transformed into a worship as sincere as that of the communion; no step we can take in life over which He does not watch, and which may not be made a step on the road that brings us nearer Him; no time here or hereafter when it will not be a delightful duty to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." This

round world may therefore become to us a temple, and this little life a song of praise.

II. THE MOTIVE POWER OF A HOLY LIFE. The stress lies on "the name of the Lord Jesus." 1. All the apparent extravagance of the injunction vanishes when we lay our hands on the secret of the Divine life. In the realm of spirit as of matter when we see a great result we know that behind it is a great cause; and we may search the world and we shall not find a power over human hearts comparable with that which lies in this name. What combination of forces has cut so deep a groove across the world? One or two of the world's heroes and sages have won wide admiration and respect, but who has laid his hand on so many hearts and touched for good so many lives? Bad as the world is, what is good in it is due to Christ. Even now the good is gaining the victory, and the King is Christ. Blot out that name and you blot out the best part of history, all that is purest in morals, elevating in literature, gentle in manners, merciful in laws. Time weakens other forces, but it adds vigour to this. 2. There is no need to enter into the various component elements which go to make up this moral force. What He was and did for us, and above all what He now is and does, explains it. One phrase holds it all—"He died for me." In Jesus we have not a man dead long ago, but a living Saviour and King ever near us, bearing the one name by which we may be saved. It is His presence by His Spirit in the hearts of His people which is the motive power of their holy life. "The love of Christ constraineth us." III. THE SACREDNESS OF COMMON LIFE AND LABOUR. The key-note of this chapter is that religion is a life in Christ, so all-pervading and all-permeating this life that it hallows everything. 1. One of the leading peculiarities of the religion of Jesus is that it virtually annihilated the distinction between the secular and the sacred. As it overstepped all barriers of climate, colour, and race to call men brethren, so it passed over all barriers of priestly function to make all men holy, and so all men are now made priests unto God. 2. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder; and He has wedded religion and life. That is no religion which we cannot carry with us wherever we go; into our pleasures and sorrows, our business and closets. (*J. Macgregor, D.D.*) *Things sacred and things secular* :—It is one of the most precious effects of Christianity that it gives interest and dignity to commonplace life. Think how it would bear on the obscure toilers of Ephesus, Corinth, or Rome. Artizan, labourer, soldier, slave, would learn the truth that God cared for him, and designed him for a glorious destiny. It is through Christ that life is worthy of the name of life. The distinction between things secular and things sacred has wrought unspeakable mischief. Involves one rule of life for the person in holy orders, and another for the man who has not received a religious vocation. The monk or the nun is a "religious;" if any be not a priest, or monk, or nun, that person need not be so religious. It is a detestable, an irreligious distinction. I. IT IS A DISTINCTION WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN UTTERLY FOREIGN TO THE MIND OF AN EARLY CHRISTIAN, AND IS QUITE OPPOSED TO THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. Christ, therein revealed, has laid hold upon the whole of life. He has consecrated what we call secular employments by Himself engaging in them. Possible to eat and drink to the glory of God. II. THIS DISTINCTION IS BAD, BECAUSE IT VANISHES ON NEARER OBSERVATION. We find it perfectly impossible to draw a sharp line. Art, science, politics, business, everyday duty, instead of being detached from religion, have such intimate relations with it that they are, or may be, and ought to be, themselves essentially religious. A bad sermon on the text, "Behold I stand at the door and knock," is (it would seem) sacred; but to paint the well-known picture illustrating same text was secular. To write hymns sacred. Then was it a sacred or a secular work to write "Paradise Lost," Wordsworth's "Excursion," or Cowper's "Task"? Surely, too, all great music is most truly religious. Again, is it a sacred or a secular work when a young girl, under a deep sense of duty, consecrates her life to attendance upon a suffering mother? Contrariwise, consider what are generally classed as sacred works—praying, preaching, administering sacraments, visiting the sick. How intensely secular they may become! How mean and perfunctory the spirit in which they may be performed! How easily may their motive come to be that so well expressed in Bible words—"Put me into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." III. THIS DISTINCTION IS RADICALLY IRRIGIOUS. Implies that all things are not of God. Churches are, but not houses we live in. Clergymen, but not men of other professions and employments. Sunday, but not other six days. But Christ claimed the world for Himself and His Father, in the sense that He claimed everything in the world. Factories and railways, camps and courts of law, mansions, museums, and picture-galleries, to say nothing of the world of trees, and rivers, and birds, and flowers, form part of the

world which belongs to Him, the Heir of all things. This is the only religious view of life. IV. SEEK, THEN, TO MAKE YOUR WHOLE LIFE RELIGIOUS. Pure religion is when the sense of God's love, of the vastness of His claims, of the breadth of His commandments, so works through the life as to make it one organic whole, and when the poor unworthy distinction of secular and sacred is forgotten; when what is most religious is most human, and what is commonest is ennobled and justified by the grace which flows from "Christ our Life." (*J. A. Jacob, D.D.*) *Doing all in the name of Christ*.—I. WHAT THIS IS. 1. To go to God through Him (John xv. 3, 16; xvi. 23-26). 2. To do all by His authority (Matt. xviii. 18-20, xxviii. 18-20; 1 Tim. vi. 15). 3. To do all by His strength (Acts iv. 6-7, 10; 1 Sam. xvii. 45; Phil. iv. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 9). Without Him we can do nothing, with Him everything (1 Cor. xv. 10). 4. For His glory (1 Cor. x. 31; John v. 23; Rev. v. 12, 13). 5. To live a life of faith for a supply of all things for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1, 2, 3; John xvi. 23). 6. To walk in the religion of the Lord Jesus (Micah iv. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Matt. x. 22; Luke xxi. 17; Rev. ii. 3, 13). 7. To follow His example (Matt. xvi. 24; 1 John ii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 21-23). II. WHY WE ARE TO DO IT. 1. Because all we are, have, or can do, is of Christ (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23). (1) All grace and strength (1 Cor. i. 30). (2) Adoption (Eph. i. 5). (3) Reconciliation with God (2 Cor. v. 18). (4) All our actual supplies (Phil. iv. 19). 2. Because the Father has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name (Phil. ii. 8-10). Therefore we must all honour the Son as the Father (John v. 23). 3. Because we cannot be accepted but by Him (Eph. i. 6; Heb. xiii. 15, v. 1). 4. Because all that comes from God to us must be by His hand. III. HOW WE MAY DO IT. 1. We must be supposed to be in Christ first (John xv. 4-5). 2. Supposing this we must exercise faith upon Him, and have constant recourse to Him, in all that we do for the supplies of His grace and Spirit (1 Pet. ii. 20, v. 7; John xvi. 16, xvi. 23, 26). 3. We must live in close communion with Jesus in the use of all His ordinances (Zech. iv. 12). 4. We must exercise our thoughts much upon Him, and be much taken up with Him in the course of our lives (Psa. lxxiii. 23). IV. SOME USES. 1. It is not in our power to act as we please, or for our own ends (Rom. xiv. 7-8). 2. The impiety of those who invoke Christ's name on their wicked courses. 3. We cannot expect God's blessing on anything not done in Christ's name. (*H. Wilkinson, D.D.*) *Doing all to the Lord Jesus*.—All have felt at times a painful void after absorption in active duty. There has been nothing sinful, on the contrary the work, it may be, has been sacred, undertaken with prayer, and been for the good of man and the glory of God, and yet there is no satisfaction. I. WHERE IS THE EVIL IN THIS? It is that we are slow to learn in act what we know in our souls, that we can do nothing good without God. We take it for granted and so forget it. 1. As to ordinary matters men, *e.g.*, think it unlikely they will die to-day because they have lived safely through so many dangers, and take it for granted that their food will nourish them because it has always done so. Where, then, is there any room for dependence on God even with prayer for protection and blessing, since the feeling assumes that they will be granted without any prayer at all. 2. As to deeds of grace. It is well, as people's devotions now are, if Christians really prayed to God to carry them through the trials of the day, as really believing that for this they needed the special help of God. How many, if they pray at all, hope to do right and escape flagrant wrong almost through the intention of doing or not doing, and think that if they call upon God in some general way things will not be much amiss with them. 3. As to daily life. Many Christians seem to think that in the daily deeds and words of life they either cannot or else must sin, and that these two are much the same. What people hate is being in earnest at all, and so they do not wish to pray for the grace of God lest they should have to be at the pains of using it. So they are ready to think that they cannot help themselves, that they must fall into sins of infirmity, and thus they cast their faults on God, or they look upon them as no great faults at all, and so they act as though they could not sin. And apart from these who learns, in the midst of his conscious and acknowledged besetting sin, to ask for the grace of God? The angry, sinful word again and again escapes, and the thought of God at best but follows it. II. THE REMEDY. "Whatsoever ye do," &c., as one bearing His name, in the might of His name, and to its glory. Refer all things to Him. Let Him be the beginning from whom all flows, the end in whom all are gathered, our aim, our reward. Have Him before thee as the pattern whom thou art to copy; the Redeemer in whom is thy strength, the Master and Friend whom thou art to serve and please, thy Creator and thy heaven. 1. But can, one will say, all the little acts

of life be done to Him? Were it not almost an indignity to bring them in reference to His great Majesty? On the contrary, great love shows itself most in little acts. Nothing is too small to be done for one deeply loved, and nothing but deep love will do unweariedly all little things to please whom it loves. Little things are the very instances of acceptable service in Scripture. It says not, "Give your bodies to be burned for the glory of God," but, "Whether ye eat or drink," &c. 2. How, then, can they be done? Do them as thou wouldst if thou sawest God by thee, with prayer that they may be done aright. He eats and drinks to the glory of God, who does so not for pleasure, but for strength for God's service; He sleeps to God's glory, who rests in Christ, hoping to rise to do Him honour; he does his daily task to the glory of God who plies it under the eye of God, and does it or not as and how he thinks God would have it done or not. 3. How can we do both at once without distraction—study, speak, or do and think of Christ at the same time? Will not work be done carelessly? Be thine own judge? Hast thou ever deeply loved parent, bride, husband, or child? Didst thou find that thou toiledst for them less diligently because thou thoughtest of and toiledst for them? Or hast thou done anything for man's praise, feeling that the eye whose praise thou prizedst was upon thee? Was this a hindrance? Nay, a good and a spur which quickened every nerve. And who looks down upon us? Our Father, our Friend and Brother, who came down from heaven and suffered for us, is ready to help and reward us. And shall not such love quicken us to do all things better. Does it not give strength to self-denial to take up our cross after Jesus? gladness to almsgiving to give to Jesus? cast a holy reverence round a sick room when we minister to Jesus? impart sweetness to teaching children that in them we receive Jesus? When thou hast learned to do all things to Jesus, it will shed pleasure over all dull things, softness over hard things, peace over trial. It will make contradiction sweet, to bear it meekly with Jesus; poverty, honourable to be poor with Jesus; toil, glad some to labour for Jesus. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Common work in the name of Jesus*:—Wherever we are called to work we must dedicate the labours of our hands or our brain to God, doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Solomon was called to build the temple of the Lord, but every man who is an honest worker, who does his best in the place where heaven has put him, is building up a temple, holy, acceptable to God. The Minister of State in his cabinet, labouring to do right and caring nothing for popularity; and the little servant-maid in the kitchen, who scorns to tell a lie, or neglect her daily duties, are both in their respective stations working for God, doing their duty. None but pure gold may receive the special goldsmith's mark, none but true, honest work can bear the mark of the Lord Jesus. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *Every-day religion*:—Plato had a fable which I have now nearly forgotten, but it ran something like this: He said spirits of the other world came back to this world to find a body and find a sphere of work. One spirit came and took the body of a king and did his work. Another spirit came and took the body of a poet and did his work. After a while Ulysses came, and he said, "Why, all the fine bodies are taken, and all the grand work is taken. There is nothing left for me." And some one replied, "Ah! the best one has been left for you." Ulysses said, "What's that?" And the reply was, "The body of a common man, doing a common work, and for a common reward." A good fable for the world, and just as good a fable for the Church. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do it to the glory of God." (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The essence of piety*:—I begin to see that religion consists not so much in joyous feelings as in a constant exercise of devotedness to God, and in laying ourselves out for the good of others. (*D. Stewart.*) *The all-pervasiveness of religion*:—Religion is one of the colours of life which mingles most intimately with all the other colours of the palette. It is that which lends them their appearance of depth, and the best of their brilliance. If by a subtle process it is taken away, all become tarnished and discoloured. (*W. Mallock.*) *The acceptable prayer*:—As a petition to the Queen can only reach her through the hands of a minister, so we can only approach God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ. All our prayer and praises must be offered in the name of the Lord Jesus. Very many of those prayers are like letters with no name and address upon them, which never reach their destination. What is it that makes our public services in church so frequently cold and spiritless? Why is it that some of us look on church-going as an irksome task, and the hours spent in God's house as the most wearisome of our lives? The reason is simply this, that their services are being offered in the wrong name. One offers it in his own name, he is sacrificing to selfishness;

another offers it in the name of fashion, another in the name of respectability, but there can be no reality in our services unless offered in the name of Christ. (*H. J. W. Burton, M.A.*) *Consistency and gratitude*.—I. "WHATSOEVER YE DO IN WORD OR DEED," &c. 1. Paul here clearly gives to Christ the whole of life. The conceptions, affections, and resolutions of the soul refer to words and works as being the principles and motives of them. For it is impossible that they should be in the name of Christ except our understandings and will so address them. The Spirit moves all, and upon this the difference between man's actions depends. It is this that gives them the right and title they have in Christian morality. Works that are the same as to external action are good in one and bad in another. The aims of an ambitious man and of a true believer have no external difference, yet if you examine the inward springs of both, you will find one a piece of vanity, the other a fruit of charity. 2. The rule is short and easy, but of almost infinite use. As a little square serves an artificer to design and mark out a multitude of lines, and to correct those that are amiss, so by this little rule there is no human action respecting which we cannot ascertain whether it is right or wrong; nor is there any part of our lives which this rule is not capable of guiding and forming to perfection. 3. Specifically the name of Christ is the rule. (1) As the name of God signifies the Hebrew word by which the Lord distinguishes Himself, so Jesus is sometimes taken for the name which was given by express Divine command. But it is not thus taken here as if Paul simply intended that in our actions and discourses we should always intermix the word Jesus, or at least preface it. (2) The name of God is taken for the power, authority, and will of God (*Deut. xviii. 19; 2 Kings ii. 24; Psa. xx. 7, lxxxix. 16, 24; 1 Sam. xvii. 45; 2 Chron. xiv. 11*). So in like manner the name of Jesus (*Acts iv. 7; Matt. vii. 22, xxiv. 5, xviii. 20*). So the apostle means—(a) That we refer all to His glory. (b) That we act according to His will. (c) That we live in entire confidence in and dependence upon Him. 4. By this (1) Paul banishes from our mind all unfruitful works of darkness, it being evident that we can do nothing that is opposed to His will. (2) He perfects and enlivens those of our works which of themselves are commanded of God, engraving on them the true motive and directing them to the true end. (3) He sacrifices those which are in their nature indifferent; e.g., if this rule is observed in eating and drinking, acts indifferent in their nature, (a) the sacred name will purge them of the excess of intemperance on the one hand, and the foolish scruples of superstition on the other. (b) Being referred to the glory of God, from indifferent they become holy and acceptable to God. 3. We must not so take the precept as if we were obliged in every act and word to raise our thoughts directly to Christ. It is sufficient that we frequently and ordinarily make this application of mind. But it is necessary that we have this deposition so formed in our hearts, that when circumstances allow us to think of Christ our souls may lean that way as being habituated to it. II. *GIVING THANKS UNTO GOD AND THE FATHER BY HIM.* These words may be taken as an independent precept (*Eph. v. 20*) or a reason for the preceding rule, a title under which we ought to do all things in the name of Christ, so that our whole life may be an act of gratitude through Christ, which is to be preferred. 1. Thanksgiving is one of the most necessary and universal offices of a Christian. Remember what we are to God through creation, providence, and grace. 2. God the Father is the proper object of gratitude as the first principle of action, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit. 3. By Jesus this gratitude is to be rendered. (1) He is the channel by which all God's goodness is poured upon us. (2) Our thanks cannot be grateful to the Father except addressed and presented by Christ. Application: 1. For the confirmation of faith. (1) We have a proof of the divinity of Christ. The faithful neither rejoice, nor speak nor act, but in the name of God—but here it is required that our whole life be referred to the name of Christ. It must therefore be concluded that He is not a creature, but very God. (2) Is it not an outrage to require that saints should share this honour with Christ as Rome does? (*Acts iv. 12; 1 Cor. i. 12*). 2. For the instruction of our faith. (1) If we would be truly Christians, we must have Christ continually before us as the pole star, the rule of our whole life. (2) How many of us fall short of this. (*J. Daillé.*) *The reality of religion*.—I. *CHRISTIANITY IS A REALITY, AND DEALS WITH REALITIES.* 1. If it could be shown that its requirements were unreal, its statements exaggerated, its views of attainment unreasonable, it would lose immensely in its character for truth and its power for good. 2. Here we may fall into opposite mistakes. (1) We may take the sayings of Scripture strictly to the letter, set them down as exaggerated, and above our

capacities. This is the way with worldly people. They admire the gospel, but never think of realizing it. It is to them a mere night of stars to wonder and gaze at, not a sun to light them to their daily work, and warm their hearts with love. (2) Some religious people, like the former, strain the Bible to its literal meaning, and then require that meaning in full, and thus lead to the same point, and encourage indolence and unbelief. (3) Owing to a mixture of these we find Christian precept and practice widely sundered. And so men satisfy themselves with being Christian hearers and heathen liver, without the least suspicion of inconsistency. 3. Owing to this enormous abuses have sprung up under the shadow of the Church. A large proportion of the infidelity of the working classes is due to this unreal teaching. A strained and exaggerated view of religion has been put before them, alien from their habits of thought, and by no means supported by the example of its professors. II. THE TEXT IS A REMEDY FOR UNREALITY IN RELIGION. 1. Observe the extent of this saying. It is plain that it must propose some motive and rule which shall touch daily life at every point. (1) Nothing is more common than a man with a powerful motive which rules his whole life—gain, ambition, love of family, science, art, victory, the exercise of an energetic nature. But whatever it be, reality is its necessary condition. There are of course many visionaries, men pursuing objects which have no real existence, but to them they are not unreal. (2) Observe how such motives act. (a) As to their inward influence on the man himself. Are they evermore in his view and present to his thoughts? Or is not their influence for the most part rather a constraining power of which he is unconscious, rather than a stimulus carried on by conscious effort? Take a man whose motives is the advancement of himself or his family. Such an object is consciously present when he chooses to reflect on it, but day by day in the toil and struggle he is not ever thinking of it, but he is pursuing it. The labourer working under the useful light and genial warmth does not lose his time and dazzle his sight in gazing on the sun, but plies his arm with his eye fixed on his work, and so uses for its intended purpose the light God has bestowed. (b) They are seldom loudly professed, so seldom that a man professing loudly a given motive arouses suspicion that he is acting on some other, and only using this as a blind. Here, as in nature, the deepest is the stillest; but by this very stillness all who are observant know its depth. Whatever mystery a man makes of his object in life, spectators generally arrive at correct conclusions. 2. Recur to the motive of the text. (1) There is a wide difference between persons who pursue objects which only appear real to them, and those whose objects are absolutely real. In the case of the former pursuit will lead away from, in the case of the latter it will lead to, the truth. It is not necessary that a motive should be based on reality to be all-constraining, but it is in order that it may be a worthy motive for an intelligent being. (2) The facts implied in the name, "The Lord Jesus," rest upon evidence as strong as can possibly be alleged for anything. The belief in Christ is not only the unavoidable conclusion of a sound mind from evidence, but the only satisfactory way to account for the state of the world in which we find ourselves. (3) But based on reality it must also be real to me, or it cannot be my motive. It must have points of contact with every part of my life. Has it these points? Not if our Lord be a mere teacher. Mere precepts cannot touch us at all points, or constrain us to do all things in a teacher's name. But our Lord, being God, became man, bore our sins and carried our sorrows, grew up through our life, and tasted death for every man. Take any life, in any condition or time, and there is help and hope for it in Jesus. (4) Now suppose a man embrace Jesus as his Saviour—let Christ's love become the acknowledged fact of His life, then it will become a constraining motive, and will not be contented with influencing some of his faculties, employing some of his time; from the nature of things it must have all—Christ is mine, and I am His, and whatever I do, spiritual or secular, business or recreation, I must do all in His name. (5) There are certain solemn times when this great motive is and must be expressly recognized; but when the whole man is possessed with the love of Christ, the whole ordinary being follows the direction of the central impulse. The Christian at his daily task is not ever pondering spiritual truths. He would be a bad workman and a bad Christian if he were. (6) Such deep constraining motive is not usually displayed before men; but its existence is not easily concealed. If a man be a Christian, men will take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus. (*Dean Alford.*) *Christian ends lend grandeur to human life*:—He who lives for the glory of God has an end in view which lends dignity to the man and to his life. Bring common iron

into proper contact with the magnet, it will borrow the strange attractive virtue, and itself become magnetic. The merest crystal fragment, that has been flung out into the field and trampled on the ground, shines like a diamond when sunbeams stoop to kiss it. And who has not seen the dullest rain-cloud, when it turned its weeping face to the sun, change into glory, and, in the bow that spans it, present to the eyes of age and infancy, alike of the philosopher who studies, and of the simple joyous child who runs to catch it, the most brilliant and beautiful phenomenon in nature? Thus, from what they look at and come in contact with, common things acquire uncommon glory. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The name of Jesus set in work*:—Those old saints of the Middle Ages, how dearly they loved to set the name of Jesus forth everywhere, by all means, in every curious work of art: not merely of Church art, mind you, but of household and domestic furniture. Go, for example, into many of the farms round here, and notice the fire-dogs that stand in the yawning chimney: how they are wrought at the sides into those most blessed of all letters, the I.H.C., by which our dear Lord is set forth. Nothing so mean that it was thought unworthy of this monogram; nothing so glorious that it was considered unfit to have that exelling glory added thereto. There they taught us the great lesson—"Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." Yes, silver and gold and gems conspired together to mark out this name on the paten, or the chalice, or the shrine; the manufacturer of Limoges worked it out in his enamel; in the monastery potteries they burnt it in on their tiles; in convents they embroidered it on chasuble and cope; in the glorious windows of churches the light came in, sanctified, as it were, and hallowed by the name of the True Light; . . . the poor peasant was encouraged, with his clasp knife, to consecrate his house by carving the same name on the hutch of his door or the barge-boards of his roof; the name of salvation could not be out of place among the dwellings of those who looked to be saved; the name which to adore will be the work of eternity, could never be out of place for the meditation and the worship of earth. (*Dr. Neale.*)

Ver. 18.-iv. 1. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands.—*The Christian family*:—1. In the family, Christianity has signally displayed its power of refining, ennobling and sanctifying earthly relationships. Domestic life as seen in Christian homes is a purely Christian creation, and would have been a new revelation at Colossæ as it is in many a mission field to-day. 2. Domestic happiness and family Christianity are made up of very homely elements. One duty is prescribed here for one member of each of the three family groups, and varying forms of another for the other. The wife, child, servant, are to obey; the husband to love, the father to show his love in gentle considerateness, the master to yield his servants their dues. Like some perfume distilled from common flowers which grow on every bank, the domestic piety which makes home a house of God and a gate of heaven, is prepared from these two simples—obedience and love. **I. THE RECIPROCAL DUTIES OF WIVES AND HUSBANDS.** 1. The Christian ideal of the wife's duty has for its centre subjection. (1) Some will smile at that as a survival of a barbarous theory of marriage; but turn to Ephesians v. 22-33, and you will find that marriage is regarded from a high and sacred point of view. To Paul all earthly relationships were moulded after patterns of things in the heavens. What the Church's subjection to Christ is, such is the wife's to the husband, a subjection of which love is the very soul. As in the loving obedience of the believing soul to Christ, the wife submits not because she has found a master, but because her heart has found its rest. Thus everything harsh and degrading disappears. It is a joy to serve where the heart is engaged, and that is eminently true of the feminine nature. For its full satisfaction a woman's heart needs to look up, and to serve where it loves. In this nobler, purer, more unselfish love, as much as in physical constitution, is laid the foundation of the Divine ideal of marriage. (2) The subjection is limited by "We must obey God rather than man," and there are cases in which on the principle of "Tools to those who can use them," the rule falls to the wife as the stronger character. Popular sarcasm, however, shows this to be contrary to the true ideal. And then woman's intellectual and moral qualities render it wise for a man to take her counsel. But all such considerations are consistent with apostolic teaching. 2. What of the husband's duty? He is to love. (1) Because he loves he is not to be harsh. He is to be as patient and self-sacrificing as Christ, that he may bless and help. That solemn example lifts the whole emotion and carries the lesson that man's love is to evoke the woman's subjection, just as in the heavenly pattern Christ's love melts and moves human wills to glad obedience which is liberty.

(2) Where there is such love there will be no tenacious adherence to rights. Love uttering a wish speaks music to love listening, and love obeying the wish is free and a queen. 3. The young are to remember that the nobleness and heart repose of their whole lives may be made or marred by marriage, and to take heed where they fix their affections. If a man and woman love and marry in the Lord, He will be in the midst, a third who will make them one, and that threefold cord will not be quickly broken. II. THE RECIPROCAL DUTIES OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS—Obedience and gentle authority. 1. The injunction to children is laconic and universal. (1) The only limitation is when God's command is contradicted. (2) The enforcement is that it is "well pleasing in the Lord." To all who can appreciate the beauty of goodness is filial obedience beautiful. In Ephesians it is regarded as "right" appealing to the natural conscience. (3) The idea of a father's power and a child's obedience has been much softened by Christianity, but rather from the greater prominence given to love, than from the limitation given to obedience. There is now great laxity in reaction from the too great severity of past times. Many causes lead to this. Children are better educated than their parents, and a sense of inferiority often makes a parent hesitate to command, as well as a misplaced tenderness makes him hesitate to forbid. But it is unkind to place on young shoulders "the weight of too much liberty." Consult your children less, command them more. (4) And as to children, here is the one thing God would have you do, and which is moreover pleasing to those whose approbation is worth having, and will save many a sting of conscience now which may tingle again when all too late. Remember Dr. Johnson standing bareheaded in Lichfield market-place, in remorseful remembrance of boyish disobedience. 2. The law for parents is addressed to fathers, partly because mothers have less need of it and partly because fathers are the head of the household. (1) How do parents provoke their children? By unreasonable commands, by capricious jerks at the bridle alternating with capricious dropping of the reins altogether, ungovernable tempers, frequent rebukes and sparing praise. And what follows? "Wrath," as Ephesians has it, and then apathy. "I cannot please, whatever I do," leads to a rankling sense of injustice and then to recklessness, "it is useless to try." Paul's theory of the training of children is connected with his central doctrine, that love is the life of service, and faith the parent of righteousness. When a child loves and trusts, he will obey. Children's obedience must be fed on love and praise. (2) So parents are to let the sunshine of their smile ripen their children's love to fruit of obedience, and remember that frost in spring scatters the blossoms on the grass. Many a father drives his child into evil by keeping him at a distance. He should make his boy a companion and a playmate, and try to keep him nearer to himself than to any one else; then his opinions will be an oracle, and his lightest wish a law. (3) Parents would do well, too, to remember Eph. vi. 4, and Deut. vi. 6-7, and not relegate religious instruction to others. Children drift away from a faith which their parents do not care enough about to teach. III. THE RECIPROCAL DUTIES OF MASTERS AND SERVANTS. Obedience and justice. 1. These servants are slaves. Paul recognized that "sum of all villainies," but his gospel had principles which cut up slavery by the roots. Christ and His apostles did not war against it nor against any existing institutions—"First make the tree good," &c. Mould men, and the men will mould institutions. And so slavery has died in all Christian lands now. But the principles laid down here are applicable to all forms of service. 2. Note the extent of the servant's obedience. (1) "In all things," the limit again being God's command, but inward completeness is insisted on, "not with eye service," &c. We have a proverb about the worth of the master's eye, which bears witness that the same fault clings to hired service, and thus darkens into theft. All scamped work, all productions which are got up to look better than they are, all fussy parade of diligence when under inspection and slackness afterwards are transixed here, "But in singleness of heart," &c., with undivided motive, which is the antithesis and cure for "eye service"—and "fearing God," which is opposed to "pleasing men." (2) Then follows the positive injunction, lifting obedience to an earthly master into a religious duty, and transfiguring the slave's lot. This evokes new powers, and renewed consecration. (3) The stimulus of a great hope is added. Whatever their earthly masters failed to give them, if they are Christ's they will be treated as sons and receive the son's portion. Christ remains in no man's debt. (4) The last word is a warning against neglect of duty. The wrong-doer will receive retribution, but it does not warrant an inferior's breach of moral law. Two blacks do not make a white—a lesson to oppressed peoples and their

champions. 3. Masters are bidden to give their slaves what is equitable. A startling injunction respecting those who were chattels and not persons. (1) The apostle does not define what is just and equal. The main thing was to drive home the conviction that there are duties owing to slaves and employés. We are far from a satisfactory discharge of these yet, but everybody admits the principle—and we have mainly to thank Christianity for that. Paul does not say, "Give them what is kind and patronizing." Charity likes to come in and supplies wants which would never have been felt had there been equity. (2) The duty of masters is enforced by the fact that they have a Master who is to be their pattern. Give your servants what you expect and need to get from Christ. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Husbands and wives*:—The duty of the latter is put first, because obedience is more difficult and distasteful than love, and because the love of the husband largely depends on the subjection of the wife. I. As to WIVES. 1. The proposition that wives ought to be subject to their husbands. (1) In general this subjection is a Divine disposition whereby the more imperfect are subordinate to the more perfect, in order to their government and preservation. Without this, neither natural affairs, nor political societies, nor even the world could subsist. From whence follow—(a) The author of creatures would not have them confounded through disorder (1 Cor. xiv. 13). (b) It is not the mark of a base but of a generous mind to be subject to his superiors. "Every man in proportion to his depravity bears a ruler with rude impatience. (c) Those who shake off the yoke of due subjection are blind to their own interests. "Obedience is the mother of prosperity." (2) In particular this subjection consists in—(a) The internal act of the heart and the acknowledgment of the mind (Eph. v. 33; 1 Pet. iii. 6). (b) Conformity of manners and affections. As a mirror adorned with gems and skilfully polished is nothing unless it express a true likeness of the person looking into it; so a wife, however endowed and beautiful, is nothing unless she render herself conformable to the manners of her husband (1 Cor. vii. 37). (c) Performance of wifely duties—conjugal love (Gen. ii. 18; Titus ii. 4; Prov. xxxi. 12)—care of the children and the house (Titus ii. 4-5). The Egyptian women had no shoes, that they might learn to keep at home. (3) The reasons for this subjection. (a) The Divine appointment (Gen. iii. 16). (b) The natural imperfection of the woman (1 Pet. iii. 7). (c) The order of creation. Woman was created after, out of, and for man (1 Cor. xi. 8-9). (d) The transgression of the woman (1 Tim. ii. 14). (2) The disadvantage of refusing this subjection. The violation of natural order everywhere is productive of disastrous disturbances. (4) The hindrances to this subjection. (a) Pride, which makes the wife disesteem her husband as unworthy to command her. To obviate this evil let her remember that her husband's dignity and her own inferiority are not to be estimated from virtues, figure, nobility, or riches; but from Divine ordination; that pride is of the devil, who, as he incited Eve, instills the same poison into her daughters. (b) Defect of love. She studies not to please her husband who is displeased with him. This evil will be avoided if parents would not compel their daughters to odious nuptials (Gen. xxiv. 57-58); if women would beware of marrying for honour and riches; and if after marriage they would avoid all occasions of offence. (c) Foolish vanities, such as an immoderate desire of appearing in public, extravagance in dress, &c. 2. The limitation of the proposition—"As it is fit in the Lord;" as far as God permits, and as far as it is befitting women who are in the Lord. The occasion of this arose from the circumstance that many believing women were united to unbelieving husbands. If their husbands should strive to compel them to idolatrous worship they must resist (Acts v. 29). The foundation for this is that all authority is derived from God and subordinate to Him. From whence it follows—(1) That thus wives render a submission grateful to God Himself. (2) That the wife is bound to be a companion of her husband in everything but sin. (3) That it is impious to choose a husband who is likely to persuade his wife to do such things as are not fit in the Lord. II. As to HUSBANDS. 1. The precept enjoining love. (1) The affection of love itself is required. This gives the heart to the thing loved, which is the most precious gift, and that in which all else is given. (2) This affection will express itself (a) In living at home, delighted with the wife's presence and company, and not seeking others in preference (Prov. v. 18-19). This effect we see in Christ's love toward His Church (Matt. xxviii. 20). (b) In direction and instruction in all those things which relate to this life and the next (1 Cor. xiv. 35), because both are partners in earthly things and heirs together of the grace of life (1 Pet. iii. 7). (c) Provision of all necessary things, in imitation of Christ's care of His Church. He who neglects this, subjects himself to heavy censure (1 Tim. v. 8). (3) In order

to perform this duty let a man beware of marrying—(a) By the eyes alone, *i.e.*, choosing for mere external beauty. Love which rests on such an unstable foundation cannot be firm and constant. (b) By the fingers, *i.e.*, choosing for money. The man who does this seeks not a wife but a money porter, and after he has laid his claws on the money, he regards not of a straw the porter. 2. The injunction forbidding bitterness. Plutarch says, "They who sacrificed at the rites of Juno, took out the gall of the victim, signifying by the ceremony that it was not fit that bile and bitterness should enter into the married state." The bitterness here prohibited shows itself—(1) In the affections. Without saying or doing anything injurious a husband embittered against his wife can make her life exceedingly bitter. That this is to be avoided we gather (a) from the precept itself, which admits of no exception. As a wife is bound to obey her husband in spite of his many imperfections, so the husband is bound to love the wife notwithstanding hers. (b) From the example of Christ (Eph. v. 29). (2) In words. A tender mind is wounded no less by bitter words, than the body is by sharp weapons. (3) In actions. God gave not Eve to Adam as a slave but as a companion and helpmeet. This tyranny is exercised (a) when the wife is removed from domestic rule and degraded to the rank of a maid, even perhaps subjected to one of them. (Prov. xxxi. 27; Titus ii. 5). (b) When things pertaining to her dignity or necessity are denied. (c) When she is treated with cruelty. (*Ep. Davenant.*) *Relative duties—husbands and wives:*—The root of all society is the family. (Gen. ii. 18; Psa. lxxviii. 6). The real strength and virtue of a nation consist to a great extent in the purity of family ties; and in this, more than anything else socially, has the religion of Christ blessed the world. Of the domestic institution, conjugal life and love are the very element and fountain (Eph. v. 25-33; Titus ii. 4-5; 1 Peter iii. 1-7). I. THE DUTY OF THE WIFE. 1. The subjection is not that of a drudge or slave, to be ruled by force. It means that in the home, as everywhere else, "order is heaven's first law." If there is to be peace and happiness in the home there must not be two co-ordinate authorities. The husband is to be the house-band—the strength and bond of the family. The submission required of a wife involves—(1) A sense of dependence. In many things this is unavoidable, she being the weaker vessel, and created in a condition of dependence (1 Cor. xi. 8-9). When she tried to lead her husband and undertook to govern, the issue was disastrous for both. This dependence is touchingly illustrated in the social sympathy for, and Divine promises to widows, because she is deprived of her earthly prop and stay. (2) A feeling of deference. "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." Many husbands, it may be said, do not deserve this, and the wife may sometimes take advantage of a husband's weakness for his good. If a woman has married a man she cannot respect, she may have herself to blame; but his weakness does not exempt her from the duty of honouring him as her husband. If he abdicate his position, she may be obliged to take the lead, yet the true wife will strive to do it in such a way as not to wound him. (3) A spirit of devotedness. It is beautiful to see a loving wife clinging hopefully and prayerfully to a bad husband. Just as forbidding is it to hear a wife complaining all round the parish. A good wife will care for her husband's comfort and character as her own; and when he is harassed will do her best to make him forget his anxieties (Prov. xxxi. 10-12). 2. The reason for this injunction—"as it is fit in the Lord." It is God's will that it should be so, and also the dictate of common sense. Where there are two wills seeking for mastery there will be wrangling and bitterness. But the wife is not a slave to do the bidding of a taskmaster, losing in a mechanical obedience the sense of responsibility. No! she may not do wrong to please her husband. Her own relation to God will determine the standard of right and limit of duty. How much has a Christian wife in her power! By submission she may gain conquests for Christ, and commend the Lord whom she supremely loves. II. THE DUTY OF THE HUSBAND. The sum and fountain of all other duties is love. 1. Positively—"love your wives." 1. Paul does not say as the complement of submission, "Rule your wives wisely, keep them in their position." The rule of love is sweet and easily borne. Either side is, perhaps, apt to forget its own special obligation: the wife is not so likely to forget her love as her subjection, nor the husband his authority as his love. But he will most surely and fully receive the acknowledgment due to him who truly loves; and she will be most tenderly loved who shows most heartily deference. Let the love which won the youthful bride be continued and augmented. 2. This love must be manifested. It is too often taken as a matter of course. Contact with the world often deadens the susceptibilities, and love is left to care for

itself and struggle for a precarious existence. But the wife craves for love, and a tone of tenderness will make her soul brighten for days amid the manifold cares of home. It is one thing to be silly in the expression of a rapturous fondness and quite another to be manly in the exhibition of a sincere affection. If a man is not ashamed of being married he ought not to be ashamed of showing his love, in, *e.g.*, preferring his wife's society, in seeking to please her, in taking an interest in those things which specially occupy her thought. And she has a right to expect it amidst the monotony of her household cares. 2. Negatively—"Be not bitter against them." It is possible to have a general sentiment of affection and yet to be bitter. This spirit is grossly wrong in a Christian man to the woman who has given up all for him. It may be exhibited in surly silence as well as in sharp words. There will be need of forbearance on both sides. Some homes, alas, are in a state of chronic conflict. He commands imperiously; she resists proudly. Some men are pleasant and genial abroad, but churlish at home. Marriage is left us as a wreck saved from Paradise; according to our spirit and conduct it will be either a reminder of "paradise lost," or a help towards "paradise regained." (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Wife: meaning of the word*:—It literally means a weaver. The wife is the person who weaves. Before our great factories arose, one of the great employments in every house was the fabrication of clothing; every family made its own. The wool was spun into thread by the girls, who were therefore called "spinsters"; the thread was woven by their mother, who was accordingly called the weaver or the wife; and another remnant of this old truth we discover in the word *heirloom*, applied to any old piece of furniture which has come down to us from our ancestors, and which, though it may be a chair or bed, shows that a loom was once the most important piece of furniture in the house. Thus in the word wife is wrapped up a hint of earnest, indoor, stay-at-home occupations, as being fitted for her who bears this name. *Qualities of a wife*:—A good wife should be like three things; which three things she should not be like. 1. She should be like a snail, to keep within her own house; but she should not be like the snail to carry all she has upon her back. 2. She should be like an echo, to speak when spoken to; but she should not be like an echo, always to have the last word. 3. She should be like a town clock, always to keep time and regularity; but she should not be like a town clock, speak so loud that all the town may hear her. (*Old writer.*) *The value of submissiveness in wives*:—A pleasure-loving husband boasted of the good temper of his wife; and a wager was laid that she would rise at midnight and give the company a supper with perfect cheerfulness. It was put to the test, and the boast of the husband was found true. One of the company thus addressed the lady, "Madam, your civility fills us with surprise. Our unreasonable visit is in consequence of a wager which we have certainly lost. As you cannot approve of our conduct, give me leave to ask what can possibly induce you to behave with so much kindness to us?" "Sir," she replied, "When I married, my husband and myself were both unconverted. It has pleased God to call me out of that dangerous condition. My husband continues in it. I tremble for his future, and therefore try to make his present as comfortable as possible." "I thank you for the warning, my dear," said her husband, "by the grace of God I will change my conduct." From that time he became another man. (*E. Foster.*) *A considerate wife*:—When Mr. Disraeli retired from office he was offered an earldom. He declined it with the intimation that if there was any reward thought to be deserved, he wished it to be conferred upon his wife, to whom he attributed all his success. His wife therefore became Viscountess Beaconsfield. On the day, long before this, when he was to unfold the Budget, he entered the carriage absorbed in thought, his wife quietly taking her seat beside him. In getting in, her finger was caught by the door, which shutting upon it held it so fast that she could not withdraw it. Fearful of driving figures and arguments from his head, she uttered no cry nor made any movement until they reached the House; nor did Disraeli hear of it till long after. All that evening the faithful wife sat in the gallery, that her husband's quick eye might not miss her from it, bearing her pain like a martyr, and like a woman who loves. (*Ibid.*) *Husband: meaning of the word*:—It means literally "the band of the house," the support of it, the person who keeps it together, as a band keeps together a sheaf of corn. There are many married men who are not husbands, because they are not bands of the house. In many cases the wife is the husband, who by her prudence and economy keeps the house together. The man who by his dissolute habits strips his house of all comfort, is only a husband in a legal sense. He is not a houseband; instead of keeping things together he scatters them. (*Ibid.*)

Husband's love :—Tiberius Gracchus, the Roman, finding two snakes in his bed, and consulting with the soothsayers, was told that one of them must be killed; yet, if he killed the male, he himself would die shortly; if the female, his wife would die. His love to his wife, Cornelia, was so great, that he killed the male, saith Plutarch, and died quickly. (*G. Swinnock, M.A.*) *A wife not loved too much* :—Rowland Hill often felt much grieved at the false reports which were circulated of many of his sayings, especially those respecting his publicly mentioning Mrs. Hill. His attentions to her till the close of life were of the most gentlemanly and affectionate kind. The high view he entertained of her may be seen from the following fact:—A friend having informed Mr. Hill of the sudden death of a lady, the wife of a minister, remarked, "I am afraid our dear minister loved his wife too well, and the Lord in wisdom has removed her." "What, sir?" replied Mr. Hill, with the deepest feeling, "can a man love a good wife too much? Impossible, sir, unless he can love her better than Christ loves the Church." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Husband's love reciprocated* :—Xenophon relates, that when Cyrus had taken captive a young prince of Armenia, together with his beautiful and blooming wife, of whom he was remarkably fond, they were brought before the tribunal of Cyrus to receive their sentence. The warrior inquired of the prince what he would give to be reinstated in his kingdom, and he replied that he valued his crown and his liberty at a very low rate; but if the noble conqueror would restore his beloved wife to her former dignity and possessions, he would willingly pay his life for the purchase. The prisoners were dismissed, to enjoy their freedom and former honours; and each was lavish in praises of the conqueror. "And you," said the prince, addressing his wife, "what think you of Cyrus?" "I did not observe him," she replied. "Not observe him!" exclaimed her husband; "upon whom, then, was your attention fixed?" "Upon that dear and generous man," she replied, "who declared his readiness to purchase my liberty at the expense of his life." (*Christian Age.*) *The influence of a wife* :—The tear of a loving girl, says an old book, is like a dewdrop on a rose; but one on the cheek of a wife is a drop of poison to her husband. Try to appear cheerful and contented, and your husband will be so, and when you have made him happy, you will become so, not in appearance but in reality. The skill required is not so great. Nothing flatters a man so much as the happiness of his wife: he is always proud of himself as the source of it. (*J. Moser.*) *A wife's influence* :—As I was conversing with a pious old man, I inquired what were the means of his conversion. For a moment he paused. I perceived I had touched a tender string. Tears gushed from his eyes, while, with deep emotion, he replied, "My wife was brought to God some years before myself. I persecuted and abused her because of her religion. She, however, returned nothing but kindness, constantly manifesting an anxiety to promote my comfort and happiness; and it was her amiable conduct, when suffering ill treatment from me, that first sent the arrows of conviction to my soul." (*N. Y. Observer.*)

Vers. 20-21. Children, obey your parents in all things.—*The mutual offices of parents and children* :—Among all those mutual offices by which society is preserved those incumbent on parents and children are the most important. If a man neglect his children or misgovern them, how will he duly treat other dependants? Or if a child shake off the parental yoke, how will he bear that of a master or prince? Whereas a good child in the house is likely to be a good subject in the state, and a good father will prove a good master and magistrate (1 Tim. iii. 4-5).
I. THE DUTY OF CHILDREN. 1. Those addressed are of either sex. Daughters, therefore, must not urge their weakness, nor sons their strength, as a reason why obedience should be dispensed with. Nor must time or fortune, for children, of whatever age or rank, are unalterably their father's and mother's (Gen. xlv. 29).
 2. The duty is obedience: which includes the "honour" prescribed by the law. But the term is used to show us that this honour is not a vain respect, and to condemn hypocritical obsequiousness (Matt. xxi. 30).
 3. The extent of the duty is universal. This is natural, and would have been literal but for sin. Now, however, exceptions must be introduced (Eph. vi. 1), and obedience in things not "well pleasing to the Lord" is prohibited. If a father should command his son to be an idolater, or to kill or hate his neighbour, or forbid him to embrace the service of God, obedience would be criminal (Luke xiv. 26; Matt. x. 37). But children are to obey—(1) In those things which are conformable to the Divine

will—in which case God's law has an additional sanction—viz., parental authority, and disobedience involves, therefore, double guilt. (2) In things indifferent. I wish that fathers would confine themselves to what is human, yet if they command anything not repugnant to God's law, however harsh, it must be obeyed. (3) Whence it appears how dangerous and contrary to the Word of God is the doctrine of Rome, which enfranchises children from this authority, daughters at twelve and sons at fourteen, giving them liberty, in spite of their parents, to enter a cloister. This directly contradicts Numb. xxx. 3-8; Matt. xv. 4-6. 4. The enforcement. The apostle might have urged the justice of the thing itself, gratitude prompting it; or from nature, which has engraven this law on animals; or from the custom of all nations, who have authorized the veneration of parents as of sacred persons, and made piety at once Divine worship and filial obedience. But he alleges nothing but the sole will of God. That this is well pleasing to God is seen—(1) From His commandment. (2) The promise annexed. (3) The punishments threatened (Deut. xxi. 18; Ex. xxi. 17; Levit. xx. 9; Prov. xx. 20, xxx. 17). (4) His Fatherly relation (Mal. i. 6). II. THE DUTIES OF PARENTS. 1. The provocation forbidden is an ill effect of the abuse of parental authority. Fathers provoke their children—(1) When they deny them a suitable maintenance (1 Tim. v. 8). (2) When they give them inhuman or unrighteous commands (1 Sam. xx. 34; Matt. xiv. 8). (3) When without necessity they compel them to perform sordid actions. (4) When they assail them with irritating or angry words (1 Sam. xx. 30). (5) When they chastise them beyond measure or desert (2 Sam. vii. 14). 2. To dissuade fathers from this fault, the apostle shows the evil it produces. Nothing more dejects the heart of a child than undue rigour. (1) It saddens him when in the countenance and actions of that person to whom he should be most dear he sees nothing but aversion. (2) It intimidates and deprives him of all courage for a good undertaking; for, finding himself ill-treated by his father, what can he hope for from others. (3) Some get hardened, and fall by degrees into desperate impiety. (*J. Daillé.*) *The obligations of parents and children.*—I. THE DUTY OF CHILDREN. 1. The duty itself contains four things. (1) Reverence (Levit. xix. 3, 20; Heb. xii. 9). (a) With respect to speech, that it be agreeable to the relation, graced with humility and modesty, giving them honourable titles, pleasing answers, respectful requests. (b) With respect to behaviour. Rude and haughty looks cannot comport with this duty. (2) Obedience. (a) Attending to their instructions. (b) Executing their commands. (c) Depending on their counsels—as regards a calling in life, and marriage. (d) Following their examples. (3) Pious regards. (a) With respect to their benevolence towards us. (b) With respect to their claims when in indigence, in infirmity, or dead. (4) Submission. (a) To their admonitions. (b) To their corrections. 2. The extent of the duty. We cannot imagine that this is so universal and absolute as obedience to God. He is the only absolute lawgiver (James iv. 12), and when parental claims conflict with His, we are absolved from our obedience. Hence we find Acrotatus commended among the ancients because, when his parents had required of him to do an unjust thing, he answered, “I know you are willing I should do that which is just, for so you taught me to do; I will therefore do what you desire, but not what you bid.” 3. The reason for the duty: because it is well pleasing to the Lord. The supreme authority of our heavenly Father makes any duties He requires highly reasonable; and in pleasing God you please your parents and yourself too, for you must needs be happy when God and you are pleased (Psa. xix. 11; Eph. vi. 1). II. THE OFFICE OF PARENTS. They are not to irritate their children, but, by parity of reasoning, to so comport themselves in good government as to secure their children's honour. Let us look, then, at this positive side of the matter. 1. The more general parental duties. (1) Prayer for all necessary things, but more particularly that they may be God's children. (2) Good behaviour (Prov. xx. 7; iii. 22). 2. More particular. (1) Sustenance. (2) Education (Eph. vi. 4; Prov. xxii. 6). (3) Disposal into some fit employment and marriage. III. THE MEANS OF MANAGING THE DUTIES OF BOTH RELATIONS. 1. To children. (1) Be thoroughly sensible of the mischief of disobedience, and the benefit of obedience. (2) Remove all tendencies to the dishonour of parents, and set a value on their instructions. (3) Perform all with sincerity and impartiality to both parents. (4) Set about your filial duties willingly and readily. (5) Persevere in all, whatever temptations you meet with. 2. To parents. (1) Be sure you keep up the life and power of godliness in your domestic practice. (2) Maintain your parental authority, and assert the dignity of your relation, yet

with love and mildness. (3) Sweeten all with expressions of endearment, to insinuate the more into their affections, but still with Christian prudence. (4) Endeavour to carry it with all evenness and impartiality to every child, according to a rational proportion. (*Richard Adams, A.M.*) *The duties of parents and children*:—God hath set the solitary in families. The domestic constitution is the type of all governments. If discipline is neglected in the home, it is rarely that the loss is made up afterwards. Coleridge has said: “If you bring up your children in a way which puts them out of sympathy with the religious feelings of the nation in which they live, the chances are that they will ultimately turn out ruffians or fanatics, and one as likely as the other.” Lord Bacon observes that fathers have most comfort of the good proof of their sons; but the mothers have most discomfort of their ill proof. It is therefore of vital importance that the reciprocal duties of parents and children should be faithfully and diligently observed. I. THE DUTY OF THE CHILD TO THE PARENT IS TO OBEY. 1. This obedience is universal. “In all things.” The law commands: “Honour thy father,” &c., and the most signal way is to obey. Parents have the wisdom of experience, and know the dangers that threaten their children, and are in a position to offer judicious counsel. Filial obedience should be prompt, cheerful, self-denying, uniform; not dilatory and reluctant. 2. This obedience is qualified and limited by the Divine approval. II. THE DUTY OF THE PARENT TO THE CHILD IS TO RULE. 1. The parent is not to rule in a spirit of exasperating severity. An excessive severity is as baneful as an excessive indulgence. 2. To rule in a spirit of exasperating severity tends only to dishearten. A certain writer has significantly said: “What if God should place in your hand a diamond, and tell you to inscribe on it a sentence which should be read at the last day, and shown there as an index of your own thoughts and feelings? What care, what caution, would you exercise in the selection. Now this is what God has done. He has placed before you the immortal minds of your children, more imperishable than the diamond, on which you are about to inscribe every day and every hour, by your instruction, by your spirit, or by your example, something that will remain and be exhibited for or against you at the judgment day!” Lessons: 1. To rule wisely we must first learn to obey. 2. Disobedience is the essence of all sin. 3. That government is the most effective that tempers justice with mercy. (*G. Barlow.*) *Children entreated to obey their parents*:—I. WHY YOU SHOULD OBEY. 1. Because it is your duty. (1) God commands it, and He is so good that we ought to obey Him, and so great that He will not allow disobedience to go unpunished. (2) Your parents command it, to whom you owe your all of earthly happiness. 2. Because it is your interest. Neither God nor your parents would wish it if it were not for your good. (1) It will secure for you God’s blessing, whereas disobedience will bring down His curse. Remember Hophni and Phinehas, and Absalom. (2) It will make you cheerful and happy in your minds, whereas disobedience makes you sullen and disagreeable to yourselves as well as others. (3) It promotes your daily improvement. Disobey, and your evil dispositions will become daily more tyrannical. (4) It makes others love you: but no one likes a disobedient child. (5) It is most favourable to conversion, but the contrary almost precludes the hope of it. 3. Because you have the perfect pattern of our Lord to urge you to obey. II. HOW YOU SHOULD OBEY. 1. Religiously. With a regard to what pleases God, and not what pleases self or parents so much. 2. Heartily and sincerely, as opposed to that hypocritical obedience which some children yield when their parents are in sight, because they are afraid of the consequences. 3. Completely. It is of no use for children to obey in some things and disobey in others; to do half what their parents command, and leave half undone. 4. Instantly, without waiting to ask the reason, or promising to obey at some future time. 5. Cheerfully. There is an obedience of the hand, but a disobedience of the heart. 6. Always. Not simply till you go to business, or are of age, or married. “Despise not thy mother when she is old.” (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *Obedience of children*:—The commander of the *Orient*, before the Battle of the Nile, placed his son, Cassabianca, thirteen years of age, on certain duty, to stay at his post till relieved by his father’s order. Soon after the father was slain. The boy held his post in the midst of fearful carnage, ignorant of his father’s fate; and while the sailors were deserting the burning and sinking ship, he cried, “Father, may I go?” The permission did not come, and there he stood at his post and perished. (*E. Foster.*) *Obedience to a master*:—The Hon. Thomas H. Benton was for many years a United States senator. When making a speech in New York

once, he turned to the ladies present, and spoke about his mother in this way: "My mother asked me never to use tobacco, and I have never touched it from that day to this. She asked me never to gamble, and I never learned to gamble. When I was seven years old she asked me not to drink. I made a resolution of total abstinence. That resolution I have never broken. And now, whatever honour I may have gained, I owe it to my mother." (*King's Highway.*) *The rarity of obedience*:—A tradesman advertised for a boy to assist in his shop, and go on errands. A few hours after the morning papers were circulated he had his shop thronged with all kinds of boys. Not knowing which to choose he advertised again: "Wanted, to assist in a shop, a boy who obeys his mother." Only two boys ventured to apply for the situation. (*J. Bate.*) *Safety of obedience*:—A pointsman in Prussia was at the junction of two lines of railway, his lever in hand for a train that was signalled. The engine was within a few seconds of reaching the embankment, when the man, on turning his head, perceived his little boy playing on the rails on the line the train was to pass over. "Lie down!" he shouted to the child, but as to himself, he remained at his post. The train passed safely on its way. The father rushed forward expecting to take up a corpse, but what was his joy on finding that the boy had at once obeyed his order! He had lain down, and the whole train passed over him without injury. The next day the king sent for the man, and attached to his breast the medal for civil courage. *Disobedience regretted*:—When I was a boy, and a little reckless, my mother used to say to me, "De Witt, you will be sorry for this when I am gone." I remember just how she looked, with her cap and spectacles. I remember just how she sat with the Bible on her lap. I laughed the admonition off, but she never said a truer thing in all her life. I have been sorry for it ever since. (*T. De W. Talmage, D.D.*) *Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged.*—*The treatment that discourages piety*:—Discouraged, Paul means, in good. His language is addressed to fathers, for he seems to have had in view the case of advanced children; and yet the language is equally applicable to the case of mothers and very little children. Children are discouraged and hardened to good—I. BY TOO MUCH PROHIBITION. There is a monotony of continuous prohibition which is really awful. It does not stop with ten, like the words of Sinai, but keeps up the thunder from day to day. All commandments, of course, in such a strain come to sound very much alike, and as they are all equally annoying, the child learns to hate them all. The study should be rather to forbid as few things as possible, and then soundly to enforce what is forbidden. II. BY UNFEELING AND ABSOLUTE GOVERNMENT. If a Christian father is felt to be a tyrant, he will seem to his child to be a tyrant in God's name, and that will be enough to create a sullen prejudice against all sacred things. Nor is the case improved when the child is cowed into fear of such a parent, and thus reduced to submission. There is a beautiful courage in a child's approach to God; but if his courage even toward his father is broken down, he will only shrink from God with a greater fear. III. BY AN OVER-EXACTING MANNER AND A DIFFICULTY IN BEING PLEASED. Children love approbation, and are specially disappointed when they fail of it in their meritorious endeavours, and especially when they are blamed for a trivial defect which, had they known, they would have avoided. But some parents appear to think it a matter of faithfulness to be not easily pleased, lest the children should have loose impressions of duty. They do not consider how they would fare if God should treat them in the same manner. But what can win a child to attempt to please God when His earthly representative is so difficult to please? IV. BY HOLDING DISPLEASURE TOO LONG, AND YIELDING WITH TOO GREAT DIFFICULTY. It is right when children have done wrong to make them feel your displeasure; but that should not take the manner of a grudge, and hold on after repentance. On the contrary, there should be a hastening towards the child like the prodigal's father, otherwise repentance will be turned into a sullen aversion, and into a feeling that there is the same heavy tariff of displeasure to be paid when he would turn towards God. V. BY HASTY AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS. When good intentions are rated low, and children are put under the ban of dishonour, they are very likely to show that they are no better than they are taken to be. To batter self-respect is the surest way to break every natural charm of virtue and religion. The effect is scarcely better where acknowledged faults are exaggerated and set off by colours of derision. It will do for a parent to be severely just, but exaggerated justice is injustice, and more terribly so when it assumes the Christian

name. VI. BY KEEPING CHILDREN IN A CONTINUAL TORMENT OF SUPPRESSION. We have no right to be anxious anywhere; it is unbelief which trust in God should set at rest. And we have less right to be, in that it destroys the comfort of others. Only to be in a room with an anxious person is enough to make one positively unhappy. What, then, is the woe put upon a hapless little one who is shut up day by day to the fearing look and deprecating whine, and supercautionary keeping of a nervously anxious mother. Nothing will so dreadfully overcast the sky of childhood as the weather this makes. It worries the child in every putting forth and play lest he should be hurt, and takes him away from every contact with the great world's occasions that would school him for manhood. And then, since the child will most certainly learn how little reason there was for this eternal distress, he is sure to be issued finally in a feeling of confirmed disrespect. No, there must be a certain courage in maternity and the religion of it. The child must be wisely trusted to danger, and shown how to conquer it. VII. BY GIVING THEM TESTS OF CHARACTER THAT ARE INAPPROPRIATE TO THEIR AGE. A child loses his temper, and the conclusion forthwith sprung upon him is that he has a bad heart. Whereupon he is reluctant to pray, as if the wrong were conclusive against him. But how would the father or mother fare if tested by the same rule? So, if the child evinces a desire to play on Sunday, has not the father, who has outgrown play, occupied himself even in church with his secular schemes? If a child is wholly perverse, it will not discourage him to tell him of it; but if he wants to be good, he should be shown how ready God is to help him and to forgive his faults. VIII. BY THE HOLDING ALOOF SYSTEM BY WHICH CHILDREN ARE DENIED A RECOGNITION OF THEIR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP. The child giving evidence, however beautiful, of his piety, is still kept back from the Lord's table, for the simple defect of years. As if years were a Scriptural evidence of grace. No plan could be devised for the discouragement of piety in children more certain in its object. They are only mocked and tantalized by their baptism itself. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*)

Vers. 22-25. Servants, obey in all things your masters.—*Servants and masters* :—**I. A PRECEPT OF OBEDIENCE.** 1. The occasion of this precept seems to spring from the circumstance that converted servants thought themselves exempt from servitude. The error had some colour. If masters embraced Christianity with their slaves it seemed unjust to hold them in bondage; and if masters still adhered to paganism, what right had they, the servants of Satan, over those who were now Christ's free men? 2. The precept involves—(1) Humility in receiving the commands of another. (2) Alacrity in executing them. (3) Universality "in all things" lawful and honest. He that is lord of the flesh must not command contrary to the Lord of the Spirit (*Matt. x. 28*). 3. Instructions. (1) Christianity does not subvert political order, such as depriving heathen masters of their legitimate authority over Christian servants. Therefore those err who think all authority to be opposed to evangelical liberty, and papists who have it that the authority of a king over subjects is dissolved by heresy. (2) Christianity frees from the yoke of human servitude that which is the best and most excellent thing in man, viz., the spirit and conscience (*Gal. v. 1*). They therefore err who would rule the consciences of men either by ecclesiastical or physical force. (3) Christians ought to obey even the unjust commands of their masters (*1 Pet. ii. 18*). **II. THE MANNER OF OBEYING.** 1. Negatively. (1) Not with eyeservice—a disease familiar to servants—obedience under the eye (*Luke xii. 45*). (2) As men-pleasers—the cause of the disease. As comedians who act in order to please that they may obtain benefit do not mount the stage unless people are looking on, so men-pleasers move not a hand unless their masters are there to behold and applaud. 2. Positively. The remedies for the disease. (1) Singleness of heart, which is opposed to deceitful eye-service. He who serves his master to the eye seems to have two hearts; one dutiful, which excites to obedience in the master's presence; the other undutiful, which impels to idleness in the master's absence. But he who obeys with singleness of heart has one heart alone and ever the same, which moves to duty irrespective of his master's presence or absence. (2) Fearing God. As the study of deceitful pleasing can produce nothing but eye-service, so the fear of God produces simplicity and sincerity. He who fears man alone will be changeable, inasmuch as it is excited by presence and allayed by absence; but the fear of God is constant because He is always present. (3) From the heart. (a) Not compulsorily and unwillingly. We do anything heartily when the mind rejoices in what the hand does. On the contrary, when the mind murmurs, although the outward act may be performed, yet it is

done from the body rather than from the mind. (b) Benevolence of spirit towards the commander of the work (Eph. vi. 7). No one obeys better than he who renders obedience from love. (4) As to the Lord. As those who serve the Lord more especially than men. Because—(a) They who obey are more servants of Christ than of earthly masters. Earthly masters buy their servants' bodies with silver and gold; Christ redeems both soul and body with His blood for perpetual liberty. (b) They obey earthly masters only at the appointment of Christ, and Him through them His stewards. (c) Christ commands them to obey their masters. III. INCENTIVES TO OBEDIENCE. 1. The promise. (1) The Bestower of the reward. The apostle rightly would have those servants expect a reward from Christ. For earthly masters give food and clothing to slaves as due in common with beasts. They are consoled, therefore, by the fact that they have a heavenly Master who will not suffer them to be destitute of a reward. (2) The quality of the reward. "Reward" and "inheritance" seem incongruous; the first being paid to labourers, the latter given to children. The celestial reward is called hire or wages, not because merited, but because of the resemblance in some sense between the two. (a) As hire is only given to workmen, so the heavenly kingdom is not given to the indolent. (b) As hire is not given until work is finished, so heaven is not bestowed until life is ended. But the heavenly reward is unlike hire—(a) in that it is given, not according to the merit of the workman, but from the grace and liberality of the bestower (Luke xvii. 10); (b) in that it is not proportioned to labours bestowed, for finite has no proportion to infinite. 2. The confirmation of the promise, "Ye serve the Lord Christ" (Matt. xxv. 40-45). All works of obedience are rendered to Christ because commanded by Him. 3. Corollaries. (1) No service is dishonourable since all is rendered to Christ. (2) No honour screens a wicked man from disgrace since he serves an infamous master. (3) They who, being placed under the rule of others, are unwilling to serve, are rebels against Christ (1 Sam. viii. 7). (4) We ought not to obey any who is opposed to the will of Christ. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *The duties of servants:*—I. THE DUTY OF A SERVANT IS TO OBEY HIS MASTER IN ALL THINGS RELATING TO HIS STATE OF SERVITUDE. There is nothing degrading in service. It is the employment of angels, and is ennobled by the example of Christ. To obey in all things is not pleasant or easy; but the Christian servant will strive to accomplish the task. He consults not his own but his master's will, nay, time. But his employer is only according to the flesh, and has no power over the spirit; nor is he to command anything forbidden by God. II. THE SERVANT'S DUTY IS TO BE DISCHARGED IN A SPIRIT OF SINCERITY. 1. Free from duplicity. From the treatment he received the slave was tempted to be diligent in the presence of his master, but indolent and reckless in his absence. Christianity has elevated man from slavery, and provided him with the highest motives to moral action. 2. It is to be done in the fear of God. "Fearing God"—the one Lord as contrasted with the master according to the flesh. The Christian servant has a conscience to satisfy. The fear of the Lord is the holiest motive power in all acceptable service. He who serves man as he seeks to serve God will take care that the Divine and human interests do not collide. III. THE SERVANT IS TO ACT FROM THE LOFTIEST RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE. 1. In every duty God is to be recognized. "And whatsoever ye do, do it as to the Lord, and not unto men." This will give a moral dignity to the most menial employment, and exalt the common drudgery of toil into a means of religious refreshment. 2. In every duty the best powers should be exercised. "Do it heartily." If the heart be engaged, it will put into operation the best powers of the whole man. No work is well done when the heart is not in it. IV. FAITHFUL SERVICE WILL MEET WITH A GLORIOUS REWARD (ver. 24). V. EVERY ACT OF INJUSTICE WILL MEET WITH IMPARTIAL RETRIBUTION (ver. 25). Some regard the wrong-doer referred to in this verse as the servant who defrauds the master of his service; others, as the master who defrauds the servant of his just recompense. But the words announce a general principle which is equally applicable to both. The philosophers of Greece taught, and the laws of Rome assumed, that the slave was a chattel, and that as a chattel, he had no rights. The New Testament shows that between both there is a reciprocity of duties and of penalties. The injustice done in the world, whether by master or by servant, shall be impartially redressed, and the injured one vindicated at the day of final retribution. (*G. Barlow.*) *Loving service is true service:*—To lead a discouraged people to the Holy War is as difficult as for Xerxes' commanders to conduct the Persian troops to battle against the Greeks. The vassals of the great king were driven to the conflict by whips and sticks, for they were afraid to fight; do you wonder that they were defeated? A

Church that needs constant exhorting and compelling accomplishes nothing. The Greeks had no need of blows and threats, for each man was a lion, and courted the encounter, however great the odds against him. Each Spartan fought *con amore*; he was never more at home than when contending for the altars and for the hearths of his country. We want Christian men of this same sort, who have faith in their principles, faith in the doctrines of grace, faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and who therefore contend earnestly for the faith in these days when piety is mocked at from the pulpit, and the gospel is sneered at by professional preachers. We need men who love the truth, to whom it is dear as their lives; men into whose hearts the old doctrine is burned by the hand of God's Spirit through a deep experience of its necessity and of its power. We need no more of those who will parrot what they are taught, but we want men who will speak what they know. Oh, for a troop of men like John Knox, heroes of the martyr and covenant stock! Then would Jehovah of hosts have a people to serve Him who would be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Faithfulness in work*.—A carpenter was once asked why he troubled to finish off a magistrate's bench so carefully? His reply was, "I can't do otherwise; besides, I may have to sit on it one of these days." (H. D. Machay.)

Ver. 23. *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord.*—*Servants of Christ*.—The apostle was speaking to slaves, who must have felt their condition to be irksome and degrading, but he applies a principle which altogether transforms it. They are to feel and act as servants of Christ. This principle is of far-reaching application. We are to serve Christ by discharging all the duties of life so as to please Him. This suggests a train of thought which has a special suitability to young men. Note then the things which are essential to the realization of this lofty ideal of Christian service. I. THERE MUST BE A FULL SURRENDER OF THE WHOLE BEING TO CHRIST. "No man can serve two masters." "He that is not with Me is against Me." Alas! how many act as though they had made a bargain with Christ; that part of their nature should be given to Him, and part retained for the world and self. In certain circumstances they seem devout and earnest believers, in others frivolous and worldly. Such a course is dishonouring to Christ, and injurious to their own souls. There are families in which the children having been asked to do something, refuse or delay; then a struggle ensues, involving discomfort to both parents and children. In others the first intimation is followed by prompt obedience. In the one case is love, order, and happiness; in the other the reverse. Why? In the one case the children had learned to obey, in the other they had not. So some of God's children have not learned to surrender their wills utterly to Him; hence every act of obedience involves a struggle; but some have learnt to make the struggle once for all, and are now happy in that service which is perfect freedom. II. STRIVE TO BE EFFICIENT IN YOUR WORLDLY CALLING. "Whatsoever," whether the work of master or servant, prince or peasant, "do it as to the Lord." When we can recognize Christ as our Master, and our work as rendered to Him, it should make us faithful servants, whoever may be our immediate employer. Unfortunately this has not been always acted on, and religion has been regarded as a disqualification for efficient service. A lad once said, when urged to decision, "I would like to learn my business before being converted, for I notice that the pious men in my father's employ are not generally good workmen." I want you to wipe out this reproach, and try to excel in everything for the sake of Christ—whether in school, workshop, or counting-house, &c. The influence of Christian character and effort is greatly enhanced when connected with superiority in business. A working man who had recently come to reside in a northern village, was asked, as he was strolling in the fields one Sunday, to attend a cottage service where the speaker was going to preach. The invitation was rudely declined, and on mentioning the matter to an acquaintance who came up immediately, he was asked if he knew who the preacher was. "No." "Why that is Thompson, the best fergeman in the district." "Oh, indeed, I have often heard of Thompson's work; I will go and hear him preach." He did so and became a new man. III. STRIVE TO ACQUIRE MENTAL CULTURE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST. 1. It will open to you many avenues of enjoyment. 2. It will enable you to discover riches and beauty in the Divine word which would otherwise be concealed. 3. It will help to keep you free from the religious crotchets by which the Christian life is now weakened and disfigured. 4. It will give you greater power to serve Christ. Edward Irving had in his Glasgow congregation the wife of a shoemaker, who was

a determined infidel. Irving visited him day after day without producing any impression. But one day he sat down beside him and began talking about his work and the material he was then handling. The man became interested, for he found that the minister knew as much about his trade as he did himself. Next Sunday he went to church, and when taunted by his former companions, replied, "Mr. Irving is no fool, he kens leather." IV. HAVE SOME SPECIAL WORK TO DO FOR CHRIST. The field of Christian usefulness is wide, and there can be no difficulty in finding suitable work. To help you in this—1. Be regular and faithful in your devotions. 2. Try to do every day something simply for Christ's sake—repress your temper, speak to some friend about salvation, practise some self-denial, for Christ's sake, and with the help of the Spirit. Conclusion: Are you serving Christ or Satan? You must be one or the other. (G. D. Macgregor.) *Do all for God*:—1. When we remember that our destiny is to live with Christ and glorified beings, and that any work that does not fit us for that is a great imperfection, it is alarming at first sight to note that the great bulk of our occupations are of the earth, earthy. All professions and trades are for the purpose of supplying defects in the existing order, and, therefore, when that order is no more, and is superseded by one in which there are no defects, the occupations of this life must necessarily die a natural death. Is there not, then, something which seems inappropriate in the circumstance that all this short life should be taken up in doing what has no reference to eternity, and will be swept away like so much litter? 2. It was just this feeling that gave rise to Monasticism. Men assumed that eternity would be given up to prayer and praise; these, therefore, must be the earthly occupations of religious men. Let us not rail at their mistake, for it is a common assumption that a secular pursuit is an obstacle to a religious mind. Hence a seriously disposed young man is pointed out as destined for the Church. 3. As the pushing of a false theory to its extreme point is one method of showing its fallacy, imagine it to be God's will that all Christians should have a directly spiritual pursuit. What then? The system of society is brought to a dead-lock. Take away the variety of callings, reduce all to that of the monk, and civilization is undermined and we revert to barbarism. This assuredly cannot be the will of Him who has implanted in us the instincts which develop into civilization. 4. But if this cannot be the will of God, then it must be His will that this man should ply some humble craft; that this other should have the duties of a large estate; that a third should go to the desk; a fourth minister to the sick; a fifth fight the battles of his country. Now if this be the case the greatest harm is done when a man thrusts himself out from his proper vocation. Each man's wisdom and happiness must lie in doing the work God has given him. So thought St. Paul. He did not urge his converts to join him in his missionary journeys, but to abide in his calling with God. 5. "With God." This wraps up the secret of which we are in search, how we may serve God in our daily business. How can this be done? By throwing into the work a pure and holy intention. Intention is to our actions what the soul is to the body. As the soul, not the body, makes us moral agents, so motive gives action a moral character. To kill a man, of malice prepense, is murder; but to kill him by accident is no sin at all. A good work, such as prayer, becomes hypocrisy if done for the praise of men. 6. Now the great bulk of life's work is done with no intention whatever of serving God. (1) The intention of some in their work is simply to gain a livelihood: a perfectly innocent and even good motive, but not spiritual and such as redeems the work from earthiness. (2) Others labour with a view of gaining eminence. The effects of work done in this spirit, if it does not meet with success, are sad to witness. (3) Others mainly work from energy of mind. They would be miserable if idle; but that work has of course no spiritual character. (4) Another class work from the high and elevating motive of duty; but if the intention have no reference to God's appointment it has no more spirituality than might have been found in the mind of Cicero or Seneca. (5) A great mass of human activity has no intention at all, and so runs to waste from a spiritual point of view. Multitudes work mechanically, and by the same instinct of routine as a horse in a mill. But man is surely made for something nobler than to work by mere force of habit. 7. Now what is the true motive which lifts up the humblest duties into a higher atmosphere? This—"Whatsoever ye do," &c. The primary reference is to the duties of slaves, the lowest imaginable. The *a fortiori* inference is this, that if the drudgery of a slave admits of such a consecration, much more does any nobler form of business. No man after this can say, "My duties are so very commonplace that they cannot have a religious dignity and value." 8

Practical counsels. (1) Before you go to your task fix it in your mind that all lawful pursuits are departments of God's harvest-field in which He has called Christians to labour. (2) Pursue your own calling with the conscious intention of furthering His work and will. (3) Then put your hand to it bravely, keeping before you the main aim of pleasing Him with diligence and zeal. (4) Imagine Jesus surveying your work as He will do it at the last day, and strive that there may be no flaw in it. (*Dean Goulburn.*) **Working:**—Were I to ask, "What was the purpose for which you were sent into the world," I should get a variety of replies. But the right answer would be, To work. So the Bible tells us, and Providence and the world around. Work is not an evil, but a good. There is work in heaven. Adam unfallen was a working man. If there had been no sin the world would not have been a world of idleness. And what is true of us is true of all God's creatures. Take water; it never stands still. Take horses, or even the birds, how soon they have to work for a living. Our text tells us how to work and for whom to work. Take then its instruction as a guide for—**I. SCHOOL WORK.** Many wish there were no such thing. This is foolish, for schools make all the difference between us and heathens. How hard it is for a man to get on in life who has had a poor education. School work is hard, but it will be made all the lighter if done heartily and to the Lord; and then there would be no need for the coaxing and bribing and threatening that are so common. **II. HOME WORK.** Young people should make themselves useful at home, and not expect that everybody should be attending upon them. Home work is an important part of the training for after life; and there is nothing in it beneath the dignity of any girl. And what a comfort it would make you, and what a saving you might be to mother's cares. And the reason it is repulsive is because you do not take to it in a right spirit. Throw heart in it, and it will soon be enjoyable. **III. BUSINESS WORK.** Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well—the work even of a message-boy, crossing sweeper, or shoe-black. It is often when people are busy at their work that God comes with a blessing. Moses, Gideon, Elisha, the shepherds, the apostles were all called when at their work. Is yours humble? You can exalt it by taking it as Christ's, and by doing it with all your heart. **IV. SOUL WORK.** This is done more for us than by us. And yet we have to "work out" what God works in. This will have to be done heartily and unto the Lord, or literally not at all. We have to escape—which surely involves earnestness—to Jesus. **V. CHRISTIAN WORK.** Every work is Christian if done for Christ, but there is work more especially done for Him. When a little girl's mother comes to visit her at school, she wants to introduce all her friends to her. Your work is to introduce them to Jesus. You need not be a missionary to do this. (*J. H. Wilson, M.A.*) "*Not unto men*":—It is related that when Phidias, the great sculptor who carved statues for one of the temples of antiquity, was labouring with minute fidelity upon the hair of the back of the head of one of the historic figures which was to be elevated from the pavement to the very apex of the building, or placed along the frieze, some one expostulated with him, saying, "Why do you take such great pains with the hair? It is never to be seen." His simple reply was, "The gods will see it." So he laboured thoroughly in the minutest things, not for the eyes of men but for the eyes of the gods. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) **Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.**—**Christian Socialism:**—Christianity, though altogether opposed to those levelling theories which disaffected men industriously broach, places the highest and the lowest on a par in the competition for eternity. Christianity is the best upholder of the distinctions in society; and he can have read his Bible to little purpose who does not see the appointment of God that there should be rich and poor in the world, master and servant; who does not perceive that want of loyalty is want of religion, and that there is no more direct rebellion against the Creator than resistance to any constituted authority, or the endeavour to bring round that boasted equality in which all shall have the same rights, or to speak more truly, in which none shall have any. But if Christianity makes it sinful to repine against servitude, it gives a dignity to the servant who would still remain in servitude. It tells the servant, that if faithful here, he may rank with his master hereafter, even though the employment of the master has been the advancement of Christ's cause on earth. And oh! it should be a surprisingly cheerful thing to those who have to wear away life in the meanest occupations, that, as immortal beings, they are not one jot disadvantaged by their temporal position, but they make as much progress in the Christian race as those placed at the very highest summit in the Christian office. (*Ibid.*) *Living for*

Christ.—I. **UNITY OF PURPOSE IS NECESSARY.** 1. For the development of character. 2. For success in life. Glory, self-interest, benevolence, each gives unity and force, whereas a man without any such governing principle becomes weak; and it is only by making one object predominant and seeking that object that great results are achieved. II. **THAT WHICH GIVES UNITY TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS CHRIST.** 1. He is the unifying principle of Christian theology. 2. Of the inward life of the Christian. 3. Of his outward and active life. We have an illustration of this in Paul, in his theology, experience, and work. Negatively he did not seek wealth or honour, either as his main or subordinate object. He simply sought the glory of Christ. III. **THE GLORY OF CHRIST SHOULD BE OUR AIM.** 1. Because it is our duty. This is the highest thing we can do. Whatever else we do will, in the end, be regarded as nothing. 2. Our inward holiness and happiness will thereby be best advanced. 3. Only thus can we be really useful. Thus only do we associate ourselves with the saints and angels. The extension of Christ's kingdom is the only thing worth living for. 4. Christ has died for you, redeemed you. You are not your own but His. Serve Him, then, under the constraint of His love. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*)

The perfect service.—It would be truthful to say that all "serve the Lord Christ." Some against their will—Pharisees, Pilate, Judas, &c. Some unconsciously—all who spread the true refinement of art, the researches of science, the charities of philanthropy. But Paul is not now speaking to such, but "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colossæ." And these words indicate about the life service of all true Christians. I. **ITS MOTIVE.** The constraint is "for Christ's sake." Such motive is—1. Deep enough. It has its hands on all the hidden springs of purpose and love. 2. Abiding enough. To please others who may change or die, or please self, which is fickle and disappointing, cannot ensure the prolonged service men can render to the eternal and unchanging Christ. II. **ITS PATTERN.** In some warfare the commander says, "Go"; in this He says, "Follow Me." "He was in all points tempted," &c. "He has left us an example." III. **ITS HELP.** The fishers after their night of bootless toil, Peter walking on the waves, Paul receiving grace to endure a hidden sorrow, are specimens of men needing and receiving help from Christ. IV. **ITS COMPREHENSIVENESS.** It includes all circumstances, whether of artizan or statesman; all ages, whether of child or patriarch; of all spheres, whether of the inward or outward life. "Whatsoever ye do." V. **ITS CONSUMMATION.** It has now the approval of conscience and the Master; it will ultimately receive "the reward of the inheritance." (*U. R. Thomas.*)

The service of Christ.—I. **HONOURABLE service.** We serve the Lord Christ—King of kings, and Lord of lords. The servants of royalty are nobles; so we are kings and priests unto God. II. **REASONABLE service.** The master had a claim upon the slave as his property won in war or purchased by money. We have been bought with a price. Christ has a right based upon His service of love; we should respond with gratitude. III. **ENTIRE service.** The slave was his master's altogether—self, family, belongings, &c. So Christ claims all we are and all we have—time, money, secularities, and not merely Sabbaths, worship, &c. IV. **HAPPY service.** Sometimes the road is rough, but the motive for treading it makes it smooth, and the companionship of Him we love relieves its tedium and lightens its darkness. V. **EASY service.** "Take My yoke upon you . . . and ye shall find rest." Love is the magic power which makes what is irksome pleasurable. VI. **THE SERVICE OF FRIENDSHIP** (John xv. 15). It is the badge of true Christian discipleship—not creeds, professions, sentiments, &c. VII. **LUCRATIVE service.** 1. It is its own reward here. 2. It has an exceeding great reward by and by. (*A. C. Price, B.A.*)

How difficulties in Christ's service are overcome.—Sometimes when a man's limb has been broken, and long weeks of rest are necessary in order that the fractured bones may reunite, there is danger lest the limb should become permanently contracted; so as soon as it is safe to do so, the patient is ordered to exercise the limb. At first the exercise gives acute pain, but after awhile, as vigour and strength return to the limb, in the thrill of health that he feels, the man forgets the pain and is glad. Now sin has dislocated man's moral nature, and though by grace it may have been reset, still God's wise exercise of it is exceedingly painful; but then this exercise begets spiritual health, and that health sends such a thrill of pleasure through the soul that the very act of obedience to, and service of, Christ, gains strength to obey and serve; and with increasing strength difficulty after difficulty disappears, pain goes, pleasure comes, and the Christian is master of his work, and delights in it. (*Ibid.*)

What makes Christ's service easy and pleasant.—That huge piece of timber which lies there in that quiet creek, from which the tide has

receded, leaving it dry and immovable in the sand; try to shift it, and it is only with the utmost difficulty that you can do so. But wait till the tide comes in, and the waters flow around it. Make the attempt now, and with what comparative ease you accomplish it! Even so there are ten thousand things in the way of duty laid upon us by God which, so long as the heart is unrenewed, seem hard and burdensome, but all of which yield when once the love of Christ has once entered and filled the heart, are cheerfully taken up and done with ease and joy to the *Loved One*. A little child had given to her by a friend a bunch of ripe, beautiful grapes. Just as she was about to eat them her mother said, "My child, will you give me those grapes?" The little one looked at the grapes and then at the mother whom she loved; and then after a pause, as the mother's love came rushing with full tide into her heart, and overmastering every other feeling, she flung the grapes into her mother's lap, and with a kiss surrendered them all (Matt. xviii. 3). The love of Christ makes sacrifice easy and delightful. (*Ibid.*)

The ruling motive of Christ's servants:—You cannot serve two masters—you must serve one or other. If your work is first with you, and your fee second, work is your master, and the Lord of work, who is God. But if your fee is first with you, and your work second, fee is your master, and the lord of fee, who is the devil; and not only the devil, but the lowest of devils—"the least erected fiend that fell." So there you have it in brief terms—work first, you are God's servants; fee first, you are the fiend's. And it makes a difference, now and ever, believe me, whether you serve Him who has on His vesture and thigh written, "King of kings," and whose service is perfect freedom; and him on whose vesture and thigh is written, "Slave of slaves," and whose service is perfect slavery. (*John Ruskin.*)

The sure reward of Christ's servants:—When Calvin was banished from ungrateful Geneva, he said, "Most assuredly if I had merely served man, this would have been a poor recompense; but it is my happiness that I have served Him who never fails to reward His servants to the full extent of His promise." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

All for Jesus:—The gospel does not barely supply us with directions, but furnishes us with reasons and power for obedience. The apostle knew that the conditions of believers are various, and therefore laid down distinct precepts for masters and servants, &c., but proposed a common motive for all. Our translation is in the indicative and states the fact—"Ye serve the Lord Christ." Is that so? If not, the original will bear rendering in the imperative—"Serve ye the Lord Christ." What an exaltation for a slave of Satan to become a servant of Christ. "Thy gentleness hath made me great." It is a greater honour to serve Christ in the most menial capacity than to occupy the throne of the Cæsars. To serve us He laid aside His glorious array and girt Him with the garments of a servant. In our turn let us serve Him alone and for ever. Ye serve the Lord Christ—I.

IN THE COMMON ACTS OF LIFE. The fact that the text was addressed to the lowest is instructive. He does not address this choice saying to masters, preachers, deacons, magistrates, or persons of influence, but to slaves. He goes to the kitchen, the field, &c., to his toiling brethren. If the poor slave should serve Jesus how much more ought I?

1. Those who are in a low estate serve the Lord Christ. (1) By a quiet acquiescence in the arrangement of Providence which has placed them where they are. While the race is as it is some must serve. When a man can say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content," that is obedience and the service of Christ.

(2) By exercising the graces of the Spirit in the discharge of our calling. An honest, trustworthy servant is a standing evidence of the power of religion, and preaches in the nursery, workshop, and many places where a preacher would not be admitted, a silent but effective sermon. This was how the gospel spread in Rome. (3) By displaying the joy of the Lord in our service. Many have been won to Christ by the cheerfulness of poor Christians. It was so in Paul's day. The Christian slave would not join in the jollity of the heathen festivals, but whenever any one was in trouble he was the cheerful comforter. (4) By performing the common acts of life as unto Christ's self. To the man of God nothing is secular, everything is sacred. "What God hath cleansed, that call thou not common." 2. This view of things—(1) Ennobles life. The bondsman is henceforth free; he serves not man but God. (2) Cheers the darkest shades. (3) Ensures a reward. (4) Should stimulate zeal. If you serve the Lord Christ, serve Him well. If you had work to do for Her Majesty you would try to do your best.

II. IN RELIGIOUS ACTIONS. Every professor should have something to do for Christ. It would be well if our Church discipline permitted us to turn out every drone. They are of little use in honey making and are at the bottom of all quarrels. But all who work are not

necessarily serving Christ. 1. Some serve in a legal spirit. This spirit has a measure of power in it, as the lash drives the slave. But Christians are free and should serve Christ from gratitude and not from fear. 2. Some in a spirit of formality, as a part of the general routine of their existence. It is the proper thing to go to a place of worship, to give their guinea, &c. Christ is not served by such mechanical working. 3. Some in a party spirit, who serve not Christ but their own denomination, and who would almost be vexed at Christ being honoured by any other sect. 4. Some out of the ambition to be thought useful. Our parents or friends wish us to be active in the Church, and therefore we do it. 5. We must rise above all this. What we do we must do for the Master alone. III. IN SPECIAL ACTS DONE TO HIMSELF. We desire not only to aid our friend in his projects, but to do something for him himself. So we want to do something, personally, for our Divine Benefactor. 1. We can adore Him. We may be doing nothing for our fellows while thus occupied, but Jesus is dearer to us than the whole race. And as we adore Him in secret so we should extol Him in public. 2. We should pray for Him. "Prayer shall be made for Him continually." It is delightful to pray for sinners and for saints, but there should be special prayer for the extension of Christ's kingdom, that He may see the travail of His soul. 3. There should be much communion with Him. "If any man serve Me let him follow Me, and where I am there shall also My servant be." To be near Him is one of the essentials of service. Let no day pass without a word with Jesus. You are His spouse—can you live without a loving word from your husband? 4. You should sit at His feet and learn of Him, studying His Word. Martha prepared a feast for Christ and did well, but Jesus gave Mary the preference. 5. You must obey Him. "If ye love Me keep My commandments," not simply build chapels, &c. 6. You must be willing to bear reproach for His sake. 7. Care for His Church. "Lovest thou Me?—feed My sheep." If you cannot serve with your tongue you can feed the hungry, clothe the naked, &c. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these," &c. 8. Bestow upon Him little wastefulnesses of love—breaking alabaster boxes of very precious ointment on Him. Think of something now and then that you could not justify in prudence. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Ver. 25. He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done.—

I. PUNISHMENT THREATENED. 1. To masters. (1) Imperious masters wrong their servants. (a) By defrauding them of their clothing, food, or wages. (b) By imposing labours beyond their strength. (c) By afflicting them with reproaches and unjust stripes, for all of which see Exod. v. (2) For these wrongs servants are not to rise against their masters in anger, nor leave their tasks through idleness: God will see due punishment done as He did to the Egyptian oppressors. 2. To servants. (1) Contumacious servants wrong their masters as far as they do not pay them due obedience and reverence; and deceitful and slothful servants because they do not yield due submission, or do so without sincerity. (2) These shall be punished for their dishonesty by God the Avenger and Judge (2 Kings v.). 3. Instructions to both. (1) In all sin it is determined by God that punishment shall be inflicted. What, then, can it profit to have avoided the avenging hand of men, and to fall into the hands of the living God? (2) Earthly masters, however powerful, cannot with impunity trample on their dependants, for they are subject to God, and must render an account before His tribunal. (3) Those who are wronged must not revenge, but leave that to God. II. AN OBJECTION ANTICIPATED. 1. Masters might object, Who shall call us to account? Slaves were accounted as nothing. According to the lawyers no wrong could be done to them. But in case of arraignment, by power and bribery it was easy to secure acquittal. The apostle affirmed that in the final court there was a judge who recognized the rights of slaves and who was not to be terrified by power, nor turned aside by favour or bribes (Job xxiv. 19). 2. Servants might object, If we neglect the duties of our wretched bondage surely the merciful God will not punish us. Paul denies that God can favour the poor more than the rich (Exod. xxiii. 3; Levit. xix. 15). 3. Instructions. (1) Not only the wrongs done to the great, but those to the small have God alike for their avenger. (2) It behoves those who act for God on earth to imitate this Divine justice. A judge should be a sanctuary for all impartially. (Bishop Davenant.) Retribution in this life:—Herod the Great, the slayer of the innocents, and first persecutor of Christianity, was overwhelmed with agonizing physical disease; and his numerous family was extinct in a hundred years. Pilate, who condemned Christ, was soon after expelled from office and committed suicide.

Nero, after slaying thousands of Christians, attempted to take his own life; but failing through cowardice, called others to his aid. The persecutor Domitian was murdered by his own people. So it was with Caius, Severus, and Heliogabalus. Scarcely one of the prominent persecutors of the Church escaped signal retribution. Clandius was eaten of worms. Decius, Gallus, Aurelian, Maximin all died violent deaths. Maximinius put out the eyes of thousands of subjects, and himself died of a fearful disease of the eyes. Valens, who caused fourscore presbyters to be sent to sea in a ship and burnt alive, was himself defeated by the Goths, fled to a cottage which was fired, and he perished in the flames. (*E. Foster.*) *The certainty of future retribution*.—As you stood some stormy day upon a sea cliff, and marked the giant billow rise from the deep to rush on with foaming crest, and throw itself thundering on the trembling shore, did you ever fancy that you could stay its course, and hurl it back into the depths of the ocean? Did you ever stand beneath the leaden, lowering cloud, and mark the lightning's leap as it shot and flashed, dazzling athwart the gloom, and think that you could grasp the bolt, and change its path? Still more vain and foolish his thought, who fancies that he can arrest or turn aside the purpose of God. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The Divine justice*.—Justice in general is the giving every one their due. In God it is that attribute whereby He disposeth all things according to the rule of equity (Deut. xxxii. 4; Psa. xi. 5), and rendereth to every man according to his works without respect of persons (Psa. lxii. 12; Job xxxiv. 11, 19; Cant. vi. 6-7). God is positively or affirmatively just (Zeph. iii. 5); He is eminently the Just One (Acts vii. 52); He is superlatively most just (Job xxxiv. 17). Wilt thou condemn Him who is most just? or, as some read it, justice—justice without the least tincture, mixture, or shadow of injustice. He giveth to all their due, without fear of evil. He standeth in awe of none for their power or greatness. His day of vengeance is against the cedars of Lebanon and the oaks of Bashan, and all the high mountains (Isa. ii. 13-14), without hope of gain. Men are unjust for bribes (Hosea iv. 14); but riches prevail not in the day of His wrath (Prov. xi. 4; Ezek. vii. 19). He is no taker of gifts (2 Chron. xix. 7), and without respect to any in their honours or outward excellencies (Jer. xxii. 24). He will not pluck the signet from His hand in the day of His justice. Israel were a people near to Him (Deut. iv. 7; Psa. cxlviii. 14), yet He doth not spare them when they rebel against Him (Psa. lxxiv. 1-3; xlv. 10-14; Jer. vii. 12). Adam and the angels were great and excellent beings, yet when they sinned He made them suffer. He accepteth not the persons of princes nor regardeth the rich more than the poor (Job xxxiv. 19). Men may do justly, God must do justly. (*G. Swinnoek.*) *Wrong-doing returns upon the sinner*.—Do you remember that poem of Southey's about Sir Ralph the Rover? On the east of Scotland, near Arbroath, in the old days, a good man had placed a float with a bell attached on the dangerous Inchcape Rock, so that the mariners hearing it might keep away. This Sir Ralph the Rover, in a moment of devilry, cut away both float and bell. It was a cruel thing to do. Years passed. Sir Ralph roamed over many parts of the world. In the end he returned to Scotland. As he neared the coast a storm arose. Where was he? Where was the ship drifting? Oh that he knew where he was! Oh that he could hear the bell on the Inchcape Rock! But years ago, in his sinful folly, he, with his own hands, had cut it away. Hark! to that grating sound heard amid the storm, felt amid the breakers; the ship is struck; the rock penetrates her, she goes to pieces, and with curses of rage and despair, the sinner's sin has found him out; he sinks to rise no more until the great day of judgment. (*G. Litting, LL.B.*)

CHAPTER IV.

VER. 1. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal.—I. THE DUTY OF MASTERS. They are not required to abdicate their mastership, but to exercise it as a service for Christ. 1. Justice has reference to servants as workers. They are to receive fair remuneration. The price of labour is generally regulated by supply and demand. This is a maxim of political economy. Wages cannot be fixed by fancy and philanthropy. If I can get work done for 6s. a

day, why should I give 7s.? Still, there is great scope for the exercise of religion. Servants may be ignorant of the market price of labour, and it is unrighteous to take advantage of it. It might be difficult on the grounds of political economy to say that the squire or farmer should give more than 10s. or 12s. a week when he can get abundance of labour at that price, but it is not difficult to see how this would not satisfy a Christian master. It is surely wrong to show more care for the horses which draw the plough than for the man who holds it. The man who has found out the lowest price at which some starving needlewoman will do "slop" work, the mistress who makes a workhouse girl her drudge for a mere pittance, may do what they think is just; but hardly if a Christian. 2. Equal involves equality as well as equity, and has in it the element of reciprocity. (1) If by the energy and skill of his operatives an employer is greatly benefitted, should all the profits be his? Is it right after a series of successful years, when a reaction sets in, to close a factory and send the hands adrift? Some employers have kept on, and been rewarded with attachment and devotion. (2) Servants should be treated as having like feelings and sensibilities with their masters. They ought not to be, as in many cases they are, treated as destitute of feeling. (3) Nor must it be forgotten that they have characters to be cultivated, and much depends on your example and treatment. It is not to be expected that they will give their best efforts for those who are reckless in their habits and indifferent to just claims. "Like master, like man." (4) Servants have souls to be saved. A clergyman waited on the principals of a large city house and asked for facilities to attend to the spiritual good of the employees. He was promptly told that the firm had nothing to do with their souls. Happily Christian employers are now waking up to their responsibility (John xiii. 13-15). II. THE MOTIVE BY WHICH THIS IS ENFORCED—"Knowing," &c. The servant is required to serve his master as if he were serving Christ, and the master is to use his authority as if he too were serving Christ. Many masters hold the responsibility of servants, and yet ignore their own. Nothing is more displeasing to God than this (Job xxxi. 13-15). The issues of the great day depend on our conduct towards each other. What we have done to the poorest Christ will regard as having been done to Himself. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Master and man:—* Observe—1. The first step towards righteousness between master and man, mistress and maid, is to respect the relation. 2. Every human being has a right to himself, consistent with the rights of others. When he sells himself, hands or brains, for honourable ends, he is to be respected. The cook makes as respectable sale of her arts in the kitchen as the owner of the real estate in renting a house. Here is safety. The poorest creature you employ never contracted to sell self-respect. 3. The strong, moreover, should bear the infirmities of the weak. 4. You may be conscience to your servants. What are the servants, for the most part? Grown-up children. They ape you; talk large, as you do at times; try to dress like you. You are your servant's example—the keeper of his conscience. You pray every morning for your wife, your children, your property, clear down to the fence at the rear of the lot behind the stable, but never for Jack in the stable. 5. There should be a reciprocity of interest felt between a Christian master and his man. Nothing in social life has been more admirable than the magnificent loyalty of old servants. Read of it in the armour-bearers of Hebrew kings, the squires of days of chivalry. After faithful years he, the old servant, tried and true, did the honours of the castle, and set the turret pennant for great festivals. He spread the plates, and made the feast ready in oaken halls; he conducted fair and brave to their chambers. On errands of knightly valour, he accompanied his lord; he carried the helmet, the shield, the gauntlets, the armour all, and bore the banner of the house; he gave the battle-cry, and when, borne down, his liege would fall, the old servant bore him from the field; and so he won the right to wear golden spurs—no longer a servant, but a knight of the line. In comparison with this shining loyalty of a barbarous age, how pitiful the frequent bickerings and mutual hurt of Christian times. An old family servant, after ten years, comes to look upon your home as her home—all she has in this world. She has clung to you in five movings, and knew just where everything belonged. She knows your ways, moods, likes and dislikes. She has had her flare-ups, and you forgave and said nothing; in return, she has seen flare-ups above her floor, and said nothing. She's been sick, and you waited for her recovery—how she thanked you; and that winter you were all sick she paid you back with interest. She prefers you to the savings bank. She has known Master Charley from birth, and has nigh spoiled him; and that other one down in Greenwood she remembers, and surprises you

by saying, "This is the 15th of May, the day he died." God bless you, good creature. She has wept in the doorway at three of your funerals; she has laughed in the doorway at two household marriages; and how she boasts of her cake. You leave everything in her hands and go on long journeys; you return and find all safe, and exclaim, "God bless her; she shall stay with us until she goes on that long, long journey." All this is possible. But it is only possible to those who carry Christ's rule everywhere, even the rule of this text. Brethren, let us treat all artizans, serving tradesmen, labourers, and workers as we wish Christ to treat us, till the time when He shall "call us no longer servants, but friends." (*Emory J. Haynes.*) *Masters deal unequally many ways*:—1. When they require inconvenient things; for though the servant must obey, yet the master sins in requiring unequal things. 2. When they impose more work than they have strength to do. 3. When they turn them away when they are sick; for it is equal that as thou hast had their labour when they were well, so thou shouldst keep them when they are sick. 4. When they restrain them of liberty for their souls. If thou have the work of their bodies, it is equal that thou take care for their souls; and if they serve thee six days, it is very equal thou shouldst proclaim liberty to them to do God's work on the Sabbath day. 5. When they restrain and withhold their meat and wages. 6. When they send them out of their service empty, after many years' bondage, and not provide that they may have some means to live afterwards. 7. When they hear every word that men say of their servants (*Eccles. vii. 23*). 8. When they bring up their servants delicately (*Prov. xxvii. 23*). 9. When they leave the whole care of their earthly business to their servants, and fail to know the state of them for themselves (*Prov. xxvii. 23*). (*N. Byfield.*)

Ver. 2. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.—We are here instructed to pray with—I. **EARNEST PERSEVERANCE.** 1. The word rendered "continue" means to apply with ardour and assiduity to any difficult and laborious thing until you shall have brought it to the wished-for end, and obtained the victory. Two things, therefore, are involved—(1) Earnestness, or intention of mind, which is necessary, because (a) occasions for prayer are such as ought to excite the mind seriously and with the whole strength. The magnitude of our intention is wont to correspond with the magnitude of the business in hand. To seek the good things of God perfunctorily. What is this but to mock God? (b) Dead and sleepy prayers from a mind wandering or benumbed neither reach heaven nor move God to hear. Our prayer is a messenger between God and us; but if the messenger loiters or falls asleep, he will neither reach his destination nor effect his business. "With what effrontery," says Cyprian, "dost thou require to be heard of God, when thou dost not thyself hear thy own voice." (c) The heart inflamed with this spiritual heat grows soft, and is dilated, and becomes more apt and capable for receiving the Divine gifts. (d) The saints in Scripture thus prayed. Jacob (*Gen. xxxii. 28*), Moses, the psalmists (*James v. 1*). (2) Assiduity or frequency (*Luke xviii. 1*; *1 Thess. v. 17*). Not that we are to be ever on our knees, but that the desire of prayer is never laid aside either by weariness of expectation or despair of obtaining it, and that God should be frequently pleaded with. Inducements to this. (a) We have constant causes for prayer—the blessings we have, the blessings we want, and the evils we suffer. (b) Constancy is the most effectual means of obtaining what we seek (*Luke xviii.*; *Matt. xv.*). (c) This perseverance greatly contributes to the declaring, increasing, and strengthening of our faith (*Psa. v. 3*). 2. Instructions. (1) Regarding intention. (a) Whereas we are exhorted to fervour, we must conclude that we are so frigid and torpid as to need a monitor to arouse us (*Matt. xxvi. 40*). (b) We need the Spirit of prayer (*Rom. viii. 2*). (c) Prayers that are not understood are of little moment, which condemns those of the Papists in an unknown tongue. Paul condemns them (*1 Cor. xiv. 16*). Augustine says: "The people ought to understand the prayers of their priests, that they may have their attention fixed upon God by a common feeling." Even Roman theologians have condemned them. Parisiensis says: "It is reckoned among the follies of that messenger (*i.e.*, prayer) that he neither cares nor thinks of those concerns except this alone, that he offers a petition to God, and is altogether ignorant of what it contains, and what is sought by it. And these things are manifest in all those praying persons who mutter with their lips alone, understanding nothing whatever of those things which the words of their prayers signify." And Cajetan confesses "that it is better for the edification of the Church," and founds it on *1 Cor. xiv.* (2) Regarding perseverance. (a) We

must take care not to be drawn away from prayer by pleasure, business, &c. For if you cut the nerves you leave the whole body without motion and strength; so if you set aside prayer, the nerve of the soul, you maim the man and deprive him of spiritual motion. (b) The misery of the ungodly; who, as they are void of faith and love, cannot pray except for form's sake, and what is more miserable than to be cut off from the fountain of blessedness? Conversely we learn the blessedness of the godly. II. WATCHFULNESS. 1. Nightly vigils. (1) The Christians of the apostle's times, on account of their enemies, were often compelled to nocturnal assemblies (Acts xii. 12; xx. 7). The custom was continued long after the need of it had ceased; but was subsequently abandoned because of abuses. Hence the sermons of the fathers on the vigils of the Nativity, Easter, the Martyrs, &c. (2) Besides these public vigils, holy men sometimes spent sleepless nights in private devotion (Psa. xxii. 2, lxxvii. 6; Acts xvi. 25; Matt. xxvi. 38-39; 2 Cor. vi. 5). 2. The vigils of the mind. The mind is watchful when no ways asleep in sin and worldly things, but always lively. To this we are called by Christ (Mark xiii. 35-36; Rev. iii. 2, xvi. 15); by Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 12; 1 Thess. v. 6); by Peter (1 Pet. v. 8). 3. Instructions. Hence is inferred (1) the sottishness of our age; we sleep at prayers in the open day; our fathers spent whole nights in prayer. (2) Our impiety and vanity: for vigils among us are scarcely destined to anything but folly or wickedness. (3) Then he raises his voice to God in vain who sleeps in his life. (4) The prayers of the ungodly are dreams, recited while the heart is asleep in sin. III. THANKSGIVING. 1. Petitioners should be grateful for blessings already granted. Aristotle wisely observed: "A return is required to preserve friendship," but we can return to God nothing but gratitude (Psa. cxvi. 12). 2. Thanks are due for things (1) deferred: for they are delayed only till a more advantageous time, and that we may esteem them more when bestowed. (2) Denied; because God knew they would be hurtful, and those useful which we deprecated. 3. Hence we are taught (1) that men are more prone to ask or complain than to be thankful. (2) That ungrateful men are not fit to pray. (3) That good and evil must not be measured by our sense, but left to the judgment of God our Father, who will always send us the best things (1 Thess. v. 18). (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Prayer*.—I. CONTINUE. Let not your intercessions be as the morning cloud. How prevalent we are in adversity; but what about prosperity? 1. The duty on the part of (1) convinced sinners. Pray on till the blessing comes. (2) Saints—not only for temporal blessings, but for more faith, holiness, usefulness. The more we pray the riper will be our graces. (3) Churches. Pentecost, as every great revival, was preceded by persevering prayer. 2. This duty need not interfere with others—our business, *e.g.* Prayer to the neglect of business was sternly condemned by Paul in the case of the Thessalonians. You may not always be in the exercise, but you may always be in the spirit of prayer. If not always shooting your arrows up to heaven, keep your bow well strung. 3. Reasons for this duty. (1) God will answer. "Ask, and ye shall receive"—not always at once, but in God's time; pray till that comes. (2) The world will be blessed. Continue, then, to pray till Christ become the universal King. (3) Souls shall be saved. (4) Satan's castle shall be destroyed—not with one blow of the battering-ram, however. But batter away till it falls. II. WATCH. 1. For you will be drowsy if you watch not. How many men and Churches are asleep in prayer because they do not watch. 2. For as soon as you begin to pray enemies will commence to attack. No one was ever in earnest without finding that the devil was in earnest too. 3. Watch while you pray for propitious events which may help you in the answer to your prayer. We cannot make the wind blow, but we can spread the sails; and when the Spirit comes we may be ready. 4. Watch for fresh arguments for prayer. Heaven's gate is not to be stormed by one weapon, but by many. 5. Watch for the answers. When you post a letter to your friend you watch for the answer. III. GIVE THANKS. We should not go to God as mournful beings who plead piteously with a hard master who loves not to give. When you give a penny to a beggar you like to see him smile, and you give at the next application because of previous gratitude. So go to God with a thankful mind. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Some qualities of prayer*.—With the Scriptures as our guide we cannot question the obligation or value of prayer. The qualities here spoken of are—I. STEADFASTNESS (R. V.) (Acts i. 14; xii. 5). The word means earnest adherence and attention, whether to a person or a thing. How weary we grow of prayer! How glad some formal worshippers are when the benediction is pronounced. This is a word against—I.

Neglectors of God's worship. 2. Forgetters of private devotion. II. WATCHFULNESS (Eph. vi. 18). 1. Against wandering thoughts. 2. Against unbelief. 3. Against dulness and heaviness. III. THANKFULNESS. St. Paul's idea of this duty may be gathered from the fact that the word he here employs, although rare elsewhere, is found thirty-seven times in his writings, and is often joined to prayer. To be always asking and never thanking cannot be right. Whenever we pray we must utter thanks. (*Family Churchman.*) *Continuance in prayer* :—Anglers, though they have fished many hours and caught nothing, do not therefore break their rod and line, but draw out the hook and look at their bait, which, it may be, was fallen off or not well hung on, and mend it, and then throw it in again. So when thou hast been earnest in thy prayers, and yet received no answer, reflect upon them ; consider whether something were not amiss either in thy preparation or thy manner or thy petition. It is possible thou mightest desire stones instead of bread, or forget to deliver thy petition to the only Master of requests, the Lord Jesus, that He might present them to the Father. No wonder, then, thou hast failed. Be diligent to find out the fault, amend it, and then fall to work again with confidence that thou wilt not labour in vain. The archer, if he shoot once, and again, and miss the mark, considereth whether he did not shoot too high or too low, or too much on the right or the left, and then taketh the same arrow again, only reformeth his former error, and winneth the wager. (*G. Swinnoek, M.A.*) *The necessity of persevering prayer* :—In the black country of England you who have travelled will have observed fires which never in your recollection have been quenched. I believe there are some which have been kept burning for more than fifty years, both night and day, every day in the year. They are never allowed to go out, because we are informed that the manufacturers would find it amazingly expensive again to get the furnace to its needed red heat. Indeed, the blast furnace, I suppose, would all but ruin the proprietor if it were allowed to go out once every week ; he would probably never get it up to its right heat until the time came for letting the fire out again. Now, as with these tremendous furnaces which must burn every day, or else they will be useless, they must be kept burning, or else it will be hard to get them up to the proper heat, so ought it to be in all the Churches of God ; they should be as flaming fires both night and day ; chaldron after chaldron of the coal of earnestness should be put to the furnace ; all the fuel of earnestness which can be gathered from the hearts of men should be cast upon the burning pile. The heavens should be always red with the glorious illumination, and then, then might you expect to see the Church prospering in her Divine business, and hard hearts melted before the fire of the Spirit. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The value of constant prayer* :—There should run through all our lives the music of continual prayer, heard beneath all our varying occupations like some prolonged deep bass note, that bears up and gives dignity to the lighter melody that rises and falls and changes above it, like the spray on the crest of a great wave. Our lives will then be noble, and grave, and woven into a harmonious unity, when they are based upon continual communion with, continual desire after, and continual submission to, God. If they are not, they will be worth nothing, and will come to nothing. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The power of constant prayer* :—Some time ago, on the coast of the Isle of Wight, a woman thought she heard, in the midst of the howling tempest, the voice of a man. She listened ; it was repeated ; she strained her ear again, and she caught, amid the crack of the blast and the thundering of the winds, another cry for help. She ran at once to the beachmen, who launched their boat, and some three poor mariners who were clinging to the mast were saved. Had that cry been but once, and not again, either she might have doubted as to whether she had heard it at all, or else she would have drawn the melancholy conclusion that they had been swept into the watery waste, and that help would have come too late. So when a man prays but once, either we may think that he cries not at all, or else that his desires are swallowed up in the wild waste of his sins, and he himself is sucked down into the vortex of destruction. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Watchfulness in prayer* :—Watch thereunto ; as a sentinel suspecting the approach of an enemy ; as a watchman guarding the city during the darkness of the night ; as a physician attending all the symptoms of a disease ; as the keeper of a prison watching an insidious and treacherous criminal. Our hearts need all this care ; spiritual enemies are near ; the darkness of the soul exposes it to danger ; the disease of sin requires a watchful treatment ; and the unparalleled deceitfulness of the affections can never safely be trusted for a moment. No ; we must watch before prayer in order to dismiss the world from

our thoughts, to gather up our minds in God, and to implore the Holy Spirit's help. We must watch during prayer; to guard against distraction, against the incursions of evil thoughts, against wanderings of mind, and decay of fervour in our supplications. We must watch after prayer, in order that we may act consistently with what we have been imploring of Almighty God, wait His time for answering us, and not lose the visitations of grace; for with God are the moments of life, of mercy, of enlargement, and of gracious consolation. (*Bishop D. Wilson.*) *The need of watchfulness*.—In riding along the south coast of England you may have noticed the old Martello towers in constant succession very near to each other. They are the result of an old scheme of protecting our coast from our ancient enemies. It was supposed that as soon as ever a French ship was seen in the distance the beacon would be fired at the Martello tower, and then, across old England, wherever her sons dwelt, there would flash the fiery signal news that the enemy was at hand, and every man would seize the weapon that was next to him to dash the invader from the shore. Now, we need that the Church of Christ should be guarded with Martello towers of sacred watchers, who shall day and night look out for the attack of the enemy. For the enemy will come; if he come not when we are prayerless, he will surely come when we are prayerful. He will show the cloven hoof as soon as ever we show the bended knee. If our motto be "Prayer," his watchword will be "Fierce attack." Watch, then, while ye continue in prayer. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Thanksgiving*.—Every prayer should be blended with gratitude, without the perfume of which, the incense of devotion lacks one element of fragrance. The sense of need, or the consciousness of sin, may evoke "strong crying and tears," but the completest prayer rises confident from a grateful heart, which weaves memory into hope, and asks much because it has received much. A true recognition of the lovingkindness of the past has much to do with making our communion sweet, our desires believing, our submission cheerful. Thankfulness is the feather that wings the arrow of prayer—the height from which our souls rise most easily to the sky. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *A day of thanksgiving*.—I have heard that in New England, after the Puritans had settled there a long while, they used to have very often a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, till they had so many days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, that at last a good senator proposed that they should change it for once, and have a day of thanksgiving. It is of little use to be always fasting; we ought sometimes to give thanks for mercies received. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 3-4. Withal praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance.—*The people's prayer and the minister's work*.—I. THE PERSONS FOR WHOM WE MUST PRAY. "For us," Paul, Timothy, &c. 1. Observe in general (1) That we ought to pray not for ourselves alone, but for others. (2) That to get a large heart in prayer, and perseverance in its practice, we must endeavour to help others by prayer. (3) That Christians should desire the prayers of others, as carnal men make use of their friends to get wealth, offices, &c. 2. Learn in particular (1) That the greatest in the Church need the prayers of the meanest. (2) That in hearing prayer God is no acceptor of persons. He is as willing to hear the Colossians' prayers for Paul as Paul's for the Colossians. (3) That Churches should pray for their own ministers. (4) That Christians should pray for all ministers. Paul does not desire their prayers for himself alone. Such a desire in some might evidence spiritual pride and envy. II. THE THINGS TO BE PRAYED FOR. 1. That a door of utterance may be opened. (1) This comprehends—(a) Liberty to preach the gospel. (b) Opportunity. (c) Preaching power. (d) Courage to rebuke sin, and declare all God's counsel without fear of any man. (e) Success: such utterance as will open the door into the heart. (2) Whence learn what makes a happy pastor: not wealth, popularity, &c., but liberty, &c. This taxes—(a) Dumb ministers that utter nothing. (b) Fantastical ministers who preach their own vanities, speaking only pleasing things. (c) Idle ministers who preach not all God's counsels in season and out. (d) Cold ministers. (3) Note the fact that Paul was in prison, yet he sought not liberty for himself, but for the gospel. Be thankful then for freedom in both senses, and labour to prevent those things which stop the mouths of God's ministers. These are—(a) Ignorance and sin in ministers themselves. Polluted lips are no lips for utterance. The lips of preachers should be touched with knowledge, zeal, and mortification. (b) The sins of the people (Ezek. iii. 24-27). (c) The violence of persecution (1 Cor. xvi. 9; 1 Thess. iii. 2). (d) Discouragement and fear (1 Cor. xii. 9, 12; Heb. xiii. 17). (e) Human wisdom which destroys the profit of the

hearer and the power of the preacher. 2. That God may open it. (1) The hearts of the best ministers are shut until God opens them and dispenses the gift. (2) 'Tis God only that opens to men the door of utterance. He "creates the fruit of the lips to be peace": "He opens and no man shuts." If He gives liberty who can restrain! III. THE END FOR WHICH THE THINGS ARE ASKED. That the mystery of Christ may be manifested. 1. The mystery. (1) To whom is the gospel a mystery? (a) To the Gentiles; that there should be a Saviour. (b) To the Jews: that salvation should be in a carpenter's son. (c) To the Papists: that He should be the only Saviour. (d) To heretics: that He should be a Divine human Saviour. (e) To the carnal man: that He should be a Saviour in particular to him. (f) To the godly man: that He should be such a Saviour. (2) How is it a mystery? Because of the hiding of it—(a) In the breast of God from all eternity. (b) In the shadows and types of the ceremonial law. (c) In the treasury of the Scriptures. (d) In the person, obedience, and passion of Christ. (e) In the hearts of Christians. (3) Why is it a mystery to wicked men? Through—(a) The veil of their ignorance. (b) Custom in sin and pleasure, &c. (c) Judicial blindness. (4) Is it a mystery? Then it should teach us—(a) To esteem God's ministers as its dispensers (1 Cor. iv. 2). (b) To strive by all means to gain the open knowledge of this secret (Eph. i. 8-9); but because every vessel is not meet to bear this measure we should get a pure conscience to carry this mystery of faith in (1 Tim. iii. 9). (c) To account this the highest blessedness (Matt. xiii. 11). 2. Its manifestation: clear sound preaching. (1) It is not enough to preach, we must preach as becometh this mystery. (a) With power (1 Thess. i. 5). (b) With instance and all watchfulness (2 Tim. iv. 2-5), (c) With patience and constancy (1 Cor. iv. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 4). (d) With assurance (2 Cor. iv. 13). (e) With all willingness (1 Cor. ix. 16-17). (f) With all faithfulness (1 Cor. iv. 2). (g) With all zeal, knowing the terror of the Lord (2 Cor. v. 11; 1 Thess. ii. 12). (h) With all holy behaviour (1 Thess. ii. 11). (2) The people must also hear, as becometh the mystery of Christ, with attention, patience, reverence, sincerity, hunger, and fruitfulness. (*N. Byfield.*) *Ministers dependent on the prayers of the people:*—There is much criticism bestowed upon preachers, much of canvassing of their doctrines, much readiness in imagining that they are averring from what is orthodox and sound, much complaining that they are not simple enough or too simple, not profound enough, or not practical enough, or not interesting enough, or not searching enough; but is there much of prayer that God would guide them into the knowledge of truth, and put into their mouths the messages most appropriate to the several classes of hearers? Indeed, we say not this in order to exculpate the minister, as though he were not himself answerable for erroneous or defective ministrations; but, probably, in most cases, the blame is at least to be divided, and as a general rule the parish or district which has derived least good from its pastor, is the parish or district which has offered the least prayer for its pastor. Whilst a congregation is murmuring that its teacher never seems to get beyond the first elements of truth, there is, perhaps, scarcely one of its members who makes it a point of conscience frequently to ask God to open to that teacher the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; whilst the pews are occupied with fears and suspicions that something unsound or even heretical has found way into the pulpit, there is hardly one of the hearers who offers his daily supplications that God would keep the instructor from being carried about by the winds of false doctrine. What marvel, then, if there is but little progress in spiritual things, and the public ministrations of the Word seem instrumental to the converting and confirming but few? The hands even of Moses fell, when not sustained by Aaron and Ur; and even St. Paul leant on converts at Colossæ, when hoping to be honoured in making converts at Rome. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Revival through prayer:*—A once popular minister gradually lost his influence and congregation. The blame was laid entirely upon him. Some of his Church officials went to talk with him on the subject. He replied: "I am quite sensible of all you say, for I feel it to be true; and the reason of it is, I have lost my prayer-book." He explained: "Once my preaching was acceptable, many were edified by it, and numbers were added to the Church, which was then in a prosperous state. But we were then a praying people. Prayer was restrained, and the present condition of things followed. Let us return to the same means, and the same results may be expected." They acted upon this suggestion, and, in a short time, the minister was as popular as he had ever been, and the Church was again in a flourishing state. The great apostle felt the necessity of co-operative sympathy and prayer (Rom. xv. 30; 2 Thess. iii. 1). (*G. Barlow.*) *The door of utterance* was a door for the Word to pass through

(1 Cor. xvi. 9 ; 2 Cor. ii. 12). In the rush and press of thought the fettered gospel seems to be identified with the apostle "in bonds." The Word is a captive with him. They are to pray therefore that God would open before him a door that the imprisoned Word may pass through and speed onward (2 Tim. ii. 9 ; 2 Thess. iii. 1). (*Bishop Alexander.*) *Doors shut and open* :—The door of utterance was closed and barred, as it were, upon the apostle by his imprisonment. It had previously remained open for a series of years (Rom. xv. 19). Now he was an ambassador in bonds. Thus, in every age of the Church, the door is at times shut to the dissemination of the gospel by the obstacles which the world and Satan raise ; by the persecution and imprisonment or banishment of the faithful missionary or minister ; by strong prejudices excited in men's minds, as in India years ago, so that they will allow no opening for the gospel ; by a prevalent spirit of infidelity, as during the first French revolution ; by a failure of means in religious societies ; by heresies and tendencies to popery for a time prevailing ; and by the rapid deaths of eminent missionaries and ministers. Then again the door is opened from time to time by the mercy of God ; as when Paul was liberated from prison and allowed again to prosecute for a few years his evangelical labours ; as, in other ages and places, when persecutions cease, and the civil magistrate protects the true religion ; when the heathen and Mahomedan nations are placed under the sway, or brought into contact with Protestant Christian powers ; when heresies and leanings towards popery are checked ; when faithful men are raised up, qualified, and placed in important situations of service ; when translations of the Scriptures are made and widely diffused ; when kings and princes are touched with grace, and take an active interest in the spread of the gospel, as Frederick the Wise of Saxony, at the period of the Reformation, and when a spirit of inquiry, like that among the noble Bereans, is excited, to "search the Scriptures daily to see whether the things" brought to their knowledge are indeed so. But the door of utterance also includes God's giving scope to the preaching of the gospel by removing external hindrances ; His granting to ministers by His Spirit suitable gifts and graces for discharging their office ; and His vouchsafing by the same Spirit efficacy to their word that it may enter the hearts of the hearers. What a vast field of intercessory prayer is here presented ! (*Bishop D. Wilson.*) *For which I am also in bonds.*—St. Paul was an ambassador for Christ. According to the law of nations, there is a sacredness about the person of an ambassador, which is never violated unless by the desperate or the barbarous. Let one country send an ambassador to another, with the hope of adjusting points in litigation between the two, and though the proposed terms may be utterly repudiated, and nothing but a war of extermination will satisfy the people to whom the embassy is come, yet is the ambassador commonly treated with every mark of respect ; his office is a sufficient guarantee for his personal safety, and until he have been honourably dismissed and scrupulously escorted, no steps can be taken against the nation whose representative he is. And if in any case a different course is pursued—if the people ill-use the ambassador, depriving him of liberty, and yet more of life, there is an indignant exclamation throughout the civilized world ; a hundred provinces are ready to make common cause with a nation so deeply injured in the person of its representative, and the tribe which has done the wrong is immediately as though placed under sentence of outlawry. Or, to take a more pertinent case. Suppose a revolt to have occurred in one of the provinces of an empire. The king is loth to proceed to extremities, and therefore sends an ambassador with proffers and terms of reconciliation. But the rebels, though they cannot disprove his credentials, nor doubt his authority, not satisfied with contemptuously rejecting his offers, cast him into prison and bind him with chains. Now, tell us, what a feeling of indignation would pervade a whole country, and how like a watchword, in which every class of the community joined, there would pass through the land the cry, "An ambassador in bonds !" "An ambassador in bonds !"—why, this is St. Paul's account of himself in the text. He is an ambassador of Christ to publish the gospel, "for which," says he, "I am in bonds." He gives the description without comment, as though sufficient by itself, and by its strangeness, to arrest the most unthinking. (*H. Melvill, D.D.*) *Prayer for ministers* :—The Rev. Solomon Stoddard, the predecessor of the far-famed President Edwards, was engaged by his people on an emergency. They soon found themselves disappointed, for he gave no indications of a renewed and serious mind. In this difficulty their resource was prayer. They agreed to set apart a day for special fasting and prayer, in reference to their pastor. Many of the persons meeting for this purpose had necessarily to pass the door of the minister. Mr. Stoddard hailed

a plain man whom he knew, and addressed him, "What is all this? What is doing to-day?" The reply was, "The people, sir, are all meeting to pray for your conversion." It sank into his heart. He exclaimed to himself, "Then it is time I prayed for myself!" He was not seen that day. He was seeking in solitude what they were asking in company; and, "while they were yet speaking," they were heard and answered. The pastor gave unquestionable evidence of the change; he laboured amongst a beloved and devoted people for nearly half a century, and was, for that period, deservedly ranked among the most able and useful of Christian ministers.

Vers. 5-6. Walk in wisdom towards them that are without.—*The wise conduct of life*.—The conduct of life is to be regulated—I. ACCORDING TO THE DICTATES OF THE HIGHEST WISDOM. 1. Religion is a life. "Walk." 2. Religion is a life shaped and controlled by the highest wisdom. "Walk in wisdom." 3. Religion is a life that should be instructive to the irreligious. "Toward them that are without." 4. Religion is a life that impels the seizure of every opportunity for good-doing. "Redeeming the time"—buying up the opportunities. Opportunity is the flower of time which blooms for a moment and is gone for ever. II. BY JUDICIOUS SPEECH. 1. Christian speech should be gracious. "Let your speech be alway with grace." 2. Christian speech should be piquant. "Seasoned with salt." 3. Christian speech should be practical. "That ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." (G. Barlow.) *Christian worldly wisdom*.—The Church sojourns for the most part amidst people of another profession. Whole nations have shut the door against Christ. In so-called Christian nations vast multitudes are non-Christian. Even in private families there is this partition. Hence the apostle having regulated the duties of Christians among themselves now points out those toward aliens. I. OUR CONVERSATION WITH THOSE WHO ARE WITHOUT IN GENERAL. 1. We are to walk wisely; not that we are to walk foolishly amongst ourselves. But as when a soldier is in an enemy's country he stands much more on his guard, and as we use more ceremony towards strangers than friends; so we are to be more careful before the world than the Church. (1) The end in view is to win them to Christ, or to prevent, at least, their taking offence at religion when in our accidental encounters or our deliberate designs. In our converse as civil subjects with foreigners it would not be suffered us to attempt to withdraw them from their allegiance, but as subjects of Christ our main duty is to rescue the slaves of Satan the common enemy. (2) In pursuing this end the diversity of the persons has to be carefully considered, their different conditions and capacities. The same things do not suit all, and all are not averse to religion, and while there are those who are of a furious disposition, there are those who are sweet and tractable. The Master (Matt. vii. 6) urges this wise discrimination, and intimates the disastrous consequences of the want of it, which experience also confirms. But we are to love all alike, while we treat them differently (Matt. v. 44). (3) The choice of means. (a) Christian wisdom excludes all actions contrary to piety, which are quite contrary to the end in view as well as offensive to God, conscience, and our neighbour, repelling from instead of attracting men to Christ (2 Sam. xii. 14; Rom. ii. 23-24; 1 Tim. vi. 1; 2 Cor. vi. 3; Titus ii. 10). (b) We owe those that are without not only abstinence from evil, but the performance of what is good (Rom. xiii. 7-8). God forbid that we should ever allow the conceit that it is lawful to break promises with them or deceive them. God will not be served with unrighteousness and treachery. Dues must be rendered too, not from fear, but for conscience sake. (c) But we are not only to yield what they can rightly claim, but humanity, courtesy, assistance, as often as, and even before they ask, and thus imitate Him who blesses both the just and the unjust. Account any one your neighbour, even if a Samaritan or pagan. By this at least you will prevent him calumniating your religion. (d) We must accommodate ourselves as far as piety will admit; not needlessly opposing them, nay, willingly yielding our rights and conforming ourselves to their wills in things indifferent, that they may see that our piety is not founded on capriciousness (1 Cor. ix. 19-22; cf. 2 Cor. vi. 14-15). (e) We must also avoid all actions or speeches likely to annoy. 2. Redeeming the time contains the utility and fruit of this wise demeanour (Dan. ii. 8; Eph. v. 15-16). As a wise mariner when the wind arises, and the waters threaten, and the presages of a tempest appear, hauls in his sails and prepares for the storm, then, accommodating himself to the violence of the waves, lets drive a little, not daring to bear up full against it, all to gain time and redeem himself by such care and conduct out of so sad and angry a season; so Paul would have us

use the same industry to ward off the blows which are menaced by the unfavourable disposition towards us of those without. II. THE QUALITIES IN PARTICULAR WHICH OUR SPEECH OUGHT TO HAVE IN THAT CONVERSE. "Let your speech," &c. 1. This is necessary (1 Pet. iii. 15). This is the most tender part of our converse with men, and should be managed with the greatest exactness. An answer here is capable of amending or impairing the condition of a whole Christian people. Wise and moderate discourse has sometimes averted or stayed persecution; whereas indiscreet, although true, speech has mightily troubled the peace of the Church. How needful, then, that our speech should be with grace. 2. The qualities. (1) Truth is presupposed (Eph. iv. 25). (2) Grace is not rhetorical embellishment, but speech without gall, venom, and virulency, and so managed as not to offend. (3) Well salted, *i.e.*, seasoned with prudence; for as salt dries meat and eats out the moisture and putrid humour, leaving a sharpness pleasing to the taste, so Christian prudence works out all that is noxious from speech and tempers it in such a manner that the vigour it leaves pleases the spirit. 3. The use—that it may appear that we know how to answer every one. (1) Paul's calling our discourses an answering intimates that we should not speak without judgment and deliberation. (2) We ought to diversify our speech according to the difference of persons. The dispositions of some require firmness and freedom, those of others tenderness. (*J. Daillé.*) *The wise and winsome walk*:—Christ's mission was to outsiders: so was His commission to His disciples. This holds good now. Every one who enters the Church enters not only into a peculiar relation with Christ, but with the world also. "Let your light so shine," &c. Outsiders watch us sharply, and Christ intended they should. The Christian is the only Bible the great majority ever look at; then we ought to live as to require no commentary to explain us. We are doorkeepers to the way of life not to block the way but to let others in. I. WALK WISELY. 1. So as not to give the lie to our professions. We tell the unconverted that Christianity will make them cheerful under trials; do we fret under them? We talk about patience; do we lose temper under the first provocation? In the prayer-meeting we pray as though religion were the one thing needful: are social ambition or money-grabbing the chief end of our lives outside? If in walking through an orchard we pick up a fair-looking apple, but on putting our teeth to it find it sour, we fling it away; so we are known by our fruits. Very few are made infidels by pernicious books, but many are by inconsistent Christians. On the other hand, a noble, godly life is the most convincing of sermons. 2. We can never win outsiders by compromising with them. The people of the world do not expect us to live as they do; and when we surrender our principles they are secretly disgusted. To draw men out of a pit we must have a firm, strong foothold or they will draw us in. He who walks closest to Christ will have most converting power. 3. The subject has a vital connection with direct efforts for the conversion of men. "He that is wise winneth souls." How little commonsense many employ in trying to bring their children, scholars, or friends to the Saviour. A father asks people to pray for his boy, and then treats him so as to harden him. Some people badger their children with ill-timed or tempered talk about their souls. And yet nothing requires more tact and gentleness. If we want to water a flower we do not dash a pailful over it, but sprinkle it. God does not send His Spirit as a waterspout, but as rain. Paul was consumed with zeal, yet showed wonderful sagacity in adaptation. II. WATCH FOR OPPORTUNITIES. "Redeeming the time." Chances must be sought for putting in the right word, and when God sends it we must make the most of it. We must go on the principle of now or never. This will make us eager to embrace opportunities; and in turn we must urge the undecided to embrace Christ at once. Every act of kindness to the unconverted will help us. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *Godly walk in evil company*:—Though evil men are not to be the subjects of the Christian's choice, yet he must sometimes fall into their company or go out of the world (1 Cor. v. 10). Civil commerce with them is lawful, though friendship be sinful. Christianity must help us as a glass window to let in the light but keep out the rain. The apostle gives us a special precept for our pious carriage among ungodly men. I. THE QUALIFICATION OF THE ACT—"Walk wisely." He who walketh according to the rule of the Word is a wise walker (Job xxviii. 28; Psa. cxix. 1; Gal. vi. 16). We must walk by precept, not by pattern: he may be a good courtier but a bad Christian who suits his conduct to his company. If, like musicians, we play no lessons but what the company calls for, our music will be jarring in the ears of God (Gal. i. 10). II. THE SPECIFICATION OF THE SUBJECT. Wicked men are said to be without. 1. Because

visible without the Church (1 Cor. v. 12-13). 2. Really without God and Christ (Eph. ii. 12). 3. Eventually without heaven (Rev. xxii. 15; Luke xiii. 25). III. MOTIVES FOR CAUTION. 1. Evil company is infectious (Psa. cvi. 35). 2. See that when compelled to mingle with it that thou get good from it: let it show thee the importance of wisdom and watchfulness. IV. RULES FOR CONDUCT. 1. Keep thyself unspotted from sin. Wicked men, as dyers and painters, are besmeared themselves and besmear others. The saint should resemble the carbuncle, which being cast in the fire, shines all the brighter. Rust will fret into the hardest steel, but not into the emerald. Thy duty is, as clothes well dyed, to keep thy colour in all weathers; and, as a good constitution, to retain thy health in the most unwholesome vapours. 2. Do not needlessly expose thyself to suffering. Christ did not commit himself to the Jews, because He knew their hearts. Set a watch before thy tongue lest it prove thy sepulchre (Eccles. iii. 7; Amos v. 13). Thy care must be always to own Christ, but as thy policy should not eat up thy zeal neither should thy zeal thy wisdom. Zeal to a Christian is like the high wind filling the sails of a ship, which unless it be ballasted with discretion doth but the sooner overturn it. 3. Be sure thou dost not deny Christ and disown thy profession. Though it behoveth thee to walk wisely, because sinners lie in wait to destroy thy life, yet be careful not to walk wickedly, for sin lieth in wait to destroy thy soul. The light of religion ought not to be carried in a dark lantern, and only shown when interest permits (Matt. x. 33; 2 Kings xvii. 41; Neh. xiii. 24). 4. Labour to get some good by such as are evil. A gracious person may improve the vilest sinner's company to his own spiritual profit. (1) Let thy zeal be more inflamed (Psa. cxix. 39, 127). (2) Let thy heart be more enlarged in thankfulness that Christ hath saved thee. (3) Thy care and watchfulness should be increased. The falls of others should be sea-marks for warning to avoid those rocks and shallows if thou wouldest avoid shipwreck (1 Cor. x. 6, 16). 5. Endeavour their reformation. Thy duty as a good physician is to loathe the noisome disease, but to pity and strive to recover the patient. Thy Father doth good to all; remember thou art His son and copy Him. Christ never sat at table with sinners but He made better cheer than He found. Be not discouraged at the weakness of thy gifts, but consider that the event depends upon Him who set thee at work, and that it is all one to Him whether thou hast great, small, or no means. A fly may hinder an elephant from sleeping. A little boat may land a man on a large continent. Endeavour to reform them. (1) By wholesome counsel. There is a special art in baiting the hook aright, so as thou mayest take sinners ere they are aware (2 Cor. xii. 16). When amongst moral men commend morality, yet discover its insufficiency, and so cause them to run to Christ for help (Matt. v. 20). When amongst the profane bring in wisely an instance of God's judgments. Sometimes conversation on earthly subjects may be turned by degrees into heavenly. Do they ask, "What news?" After prudent preface say that thou canst tell them good news from a far country—Christ Jesus came to save sinners. Do they ask how such and such do? Acquaint them of their worldly welfare, and, if convenient, of the health of their soul. Do they ask the price of commodities? Raise their heart to the wine and milk to be had without money, &c. This is true alchemy and will turn all to gold. See our Lord's example (Matt. xv. 20; John iv. 21, vi. 25-27). (2) By thy gracious carriage in their company. A Christian is God's jewel (Mal. iii. 17), and should always cast a radiance before the eyes of others (Phil. ii. 15; Titus ii. 7, 8; 1 Pet. iii. 15, 16). Grace powerfully but silently opposes wickedness, and forces reverence from its bitterest enemies. The righteousness of Noah condemned the old world; the holiness of John gained respect from Herod; the sanctity of the three worthies triumphed in the conscience of Nebuchadnezzar, and the innocence of Daniel in the soul of Darius (1 Pet. ii. 11-12). (3) By faithful reprehension; but—(a) Be sure the thing thou reprovest be a sin. Some show much heat but little holiness in making a great stir about nothing (Josh. xxii. 16; Sam. ii). It is dangerous to apply medicines on the bare supposition of sickness. Then, again, he that reproves the deed will do more harm than good if he is not able to convince the doer (Titus i. 9; Job vi. 25). Mistaken or misapplied arguments seldom reprove any but the arguer, and him they always reprove. (b) Reprove seriously. Reproof is an edged tool and must not be jested with. Cold reproofs are like the noise of cannons a great way off. He that reproves sin merrily and makes the company laugh will destroy the sinner instead of his sin. Some men shoot their reprehensions, like pellets through a pipe, with no more strength than would kill a sparrow. He that would hit the mark must draw his arrow of reproof home. The hammer of the word

breaks not the heart if it be laid lightly on. Be the reproof never so gracious, and the plaster never so good, it will be ineffectual if not applied to the patient himself (2 Sam. xii. 7; Acts ii. 36-37). (c) Reprove seasonably. It is not necessary and convenient at all seasons. The best medicine will be thrown away if given at an unfit time. A fool will always be talking, but a wise man will keep a word for afterward (Prov. xxix.). Small fish are twitched up with the violence of a sudden pull, when the like action would break the line whereon a great one hangs. Fabius conquered by delaying, but Cæsar overcame by expedition. (d) Reprove prudently (Prov. xxv. 12). Every mountebank is not fit for this office. Have respect to the quality of the person. Superiors must be amended by exhortation, equals by friendly admonition, inferiors by gentle reproof. Have respect also to the disposition of the offender. Some in their fainting fits are recovered easily with sprinkling cold water on their faces, others must be rubbed hard. Some men are like briars, and have to be handled gently; others, like nettles, have to be dealt with roughly (Jude 22, 23). The sturdy oak will not be so easily bent as the gentle willow. Respect also is to be had to faults. Wise physicians will distinguish between a pimple and a plague sore. Who would give so great a blow to kill a fly as to kill an ox? (e) Reprove compassionately. The iron of Asher's shoes were dipped in oil. Reproofs should be as ointments gently rubbed in by the warm fire of love. The reprover should have a lion's stout heart if he would be faithful, and a lady's soft hand, or he is not likely to be successful. He that would gather fruit must pluck the bough gently towards him; if too hard he may break it. 6. Mourn for the sins thou canst not amend (Psa. cxix. 135; 2 Pet. ii. 8). (*G. Swinnoek, M.A.*) *The duties of those within to those without*:—Those who are within are those who have "fled for refuge" to Christ, and are within the fold, the fortress, the ark. Men who sit safe within while the storm howls, may simply think with selfish complacency of those exposed to its fierceness. The phrase may express spiritual pride and even contempt. All close corporations tend to generate dislike and scorn of outsiders, and the Church has had its own share of such feeling; but there is no trace of anything of the sort here. Rather is there pathos and pity in the world, and a recognition that their sad condition gives these outsiders a claim on Christian men, who are bound to go out to their help to bring them in. Precisely because they are "without" do those within owe them a wise walk, that "if any will not hear the Word, they may without the Word be won." We owe them such a walk as may tend to bring them in, and if our walk does not seem to them very attractive, small wonder if they prefer to remain where they are. Let us take care lest instead of being door-keepers to the house of the Lord, to beckon passers-by and draw them in, we block the doorway, and keep them from seeing the wonders within. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christian deportment towards unbelievers*:—"Toward them that are without," whatever their conduct, appearance, profession, we must "walk in wisdom." They may be within the circle of our acquaintance, and of our own household. While we feel that between us and the fellow Christian who was but yesterday a stranger a bond stronger than death, between us and the object of our warmest human love there is a wall of separation. To such and all "without"—I. DO YOUR DUTY—your daily duty, especially in little things, faithfully. Do what is right for you as a man; and what is right for you as a man is doubly right for you as a Christian. And you are doubly in the wrong if you as a Christian man are not scrupulously honest, if you give way to rudeness, irritability, vulgarity, selfishness. II. LOVE THEM—not simply their souls. We do not read of God and Christ loving people's souls. God loved the world; Christ tasted death for every man. Be human. There is no opposition between manhood and holiness. The Holy One revealed Himself to sinners as the Son of Man, one of themselves: and this was the secret of His power. III. BE NATURAL—yourselves. Do not have a Christian face and voice taking the place of your own. Speak plainly. Christians are often charged with affectation. Unnaturalness does not come from having too much religion, but from not having enough. What could be more natural than the words and ways of Christ? IV. BE TRUE—not simply do not tell lies, but be transparent. Let men be able to see through you, to perceive that there is no guile, no hidden motives, that while you profess to love God supremely you are not loving something else more than God. V. BE HUMBLE. Christ was meek and lowly of heart; and what ought we to be? Be humble under a sense of your sinfulness and under the weight of God's mercies. Do not try to impress others with your superiority, or you will make the contrary impression. VI. BE HOLY. Avoid the least appearance of evil. Let it be seen from your conduct that your religion

is not a matter of theory, emotion, talk, but a matter of fact. Remember what Peter says to wives who have unbelieving husbands. A young man was asked, "Under whose preaching were you converted?" "Under my aunt's practice," was the reply. VII. BE HAPPY. If there is sunshine on your countenances others will believe that the Sun of Righteousness is in your hearts. But if we speak about that Sun and they never see anything but darkness and gloom they will not believe. VIII. BE KIND. Do not simply love them; show it in common or rather uncommon kindness. Treat men as Christ treated you. He never put on airs. Remember how he treated Zacchæus, the woman of Samaria, &c. (*A. Monod, D.D.*) *The wisdom of kindness as a means of conversion*:—There was an infidel who was dangerously ill, and a colporteur went to see him. The man would not receive him, and asked him never to come again. The colporteur, after a few words, left the house, but he noticed that the man was very poor. There seemed to be none of the things necessary to health about his home. What did the colporteur do? He did not go and write an address about charity, but he went to the grocer's and he sent provisions to the man. A little time after, he went again. He was well received. The man said, "If you please, sir, was it you who sent those provisions?" "Well, yes, it was; but do not let us talk about that." "It was very kind of you. I treated you with so much discourtesy, and you were so good to me! My unbelieving friends, who profess to love me, have not done anything for me, but here you have sent me these provisions. Please read me something out of your Book." He read to him, and visited him again and again. Before that man died he was brought to a knowledge of Christ. The work had been begun by an act of kindness. Pastor Funcke, of Bremen, went to see a working-man, whom he describes as a tall, strong man, with a red beard, living in a miserable little place, up a flight of rickety stairs. The man would not listen to him at all, but flew into a passion, saying: "I don't want to hear anything about your God. I don't believe there is a God." Then, clenching his fist, he said, "This is my god!" and bringing it down on the table with a thump, he added: "If ever I find you on these premises again, I will put my god into your face!" The pastor went away, but a few days later, hearing that the man was out of employment, he busied himself in finding a situation for him. By-and-by the man heard of this. He went to him and said, "Is it true, sir, that you took the trouble to find me this employment?" "Why, yes, it is true." "Well," he said, "all Christians are not hypocrites!" That was, to him, a discovery, it seems. He invited the pastor to his house, and listened to him. "And now," says Mr. Funcke, "he, his wife, and children, are amongst the best of my church members, and theirs is one of the happiest homes in the parish." Surely, this was "walking in wisdom toward them that are without." Now I will give you a fact of another kind, that will, perhaps, meet some of our own difficulties. It was told me by the sister of the young man of whom I am about to speak. He had a pious father. They lived in a large town. One day he asked his father if he might go to the theatre. As he was no longer a mere boy, of course the father could not prevent him from going. "You know I disapprove of these things," he said; "I think it will do you harm; but, of course, I cannot forbid you to go." Well, the young man felt rather uncomfortable; however, he went. He came home late (it was a winter night), just expecting to grope his way to his room. But he found a lighted lamp, a bright fire, and something warm to eat and drink. His father did not wait for him, and that was also wise; it would have seemed as if he had watched for his return to lecture him. No; but he had made ready a welcome for him. What effect did that have? It had the effect of drawing that son's heart toward his father more than anything else could have done, and of greatly diminishing, to say the least of it, his taste for the theatre. This much I know, that he became a faithful disciple of Christ, and was about to enter the ministry, when God took him to Himself, several years ago. (*Ibid.*) Redeeming the time. Take a lesson from—I. THE MERCHANT. How he redeems the time; by wise employment of capital, by sedulous attention to his business, by sagacious plans, watchfulness for openings, and correct balancing of his affairs from time to time. Here is an example for the Christian, who should augment and employ his spiritual capital of gifts and graces, by industry, intelligence, and self-denial, and know exactly how his soul stands with God. II. THE FARMER. Note his knowledge and thrifty management of his stock and crops. How carefully he prepares the ground at the proper season, then sows the seed, then removes all obstructions from the soil, reaps and garners the harvest, and finally seeks the best

market to sell it in. Where would the farmer be but for his constant and habitual redemption of time. The Christian should act like him in regard to the Divine seed-wheat in his own mind or that of others (Eccles. xi. 6; Isa. xxxii. 20; Psa. cxxvi. 6). III. THE STUDENT, PHILOSOPHER, AND STATESMAN. No man ever rose to eminence who did not wisely employ his time. The student economizes every moment and never tires in his researches. The philosopher tests by science and reason the mysteries of nature, omitting no opportunity or detail. And thus the statesman studies the complicated problems of politics and provides for their solution in season and out. And so the Christian student, the eyes of whose understanding are opened, ponders Divine truth. The Christian philosopher here learns the origin, nature, and end of all things. And the Christian, being a statesman, too, feeds on schemes of advancement for the kingdom of God. But in each capacity he needs to redeem the time; and if any day passes without embracing some opportunity for learning new truth, or doing some fresh good, he should feel with that Roman Emperor who said, "I have lost a day." (*J. G. Angley, M.A.*)

Redeeming the time:—The wheels of nature are not made to roll backward; everything presses on towards eternity; from the birth of time, an impetuous current has set in, which bears all the sons of men towards that interminable ocean. Meanwhile, heaven is attracting to itself whatever is congenial to its nature, is enriching itself by the spoils of earth, and collecting within its capacious bosom whatever is pure, permanent, and Divine, leaving nothing for the last fire to consume but the objects and the slaves of concupiscence; while everything which grace has prepared and beautified shall be gathered, from the ruins of the world, to adorn the eternal city, "which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Let us obey the voice that calls us thither, let us seek the things that are above, and no longer cleave to a world which must shortly perish, and which we must shortly quit, while we neglect to prepare for that in which we are invited to dwell for ever. (*Robert Hall.*)

The redemption of time:—I. THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME. This may be inferred from the names given it in Scripture—"The day of salvation," "The acceptable year of the Lord," "An appointed time." It is the season in which alone the business of religion can be transacted. Those advise badly who say "there is time enough yet," for who knows what a day may bring forth. It may be longer or shorter, but the day of salvation, like any other, is limited, and must soon come to an end. II. THE RAPIDITY OF THE FLIGHT OF TIME. "Time and tide wait for no man." The little we have on hand is all we have, and even this short space is hurrying on so fast that to catch it is like dipping your hand in a running stream which glides through the fingers that would detain it. The Egyptians represented it as a serpent creeping on silently and gliding away imperceptibly. And yet there are those who act as though it had no assignable limit. III. THE LARGE PORTION OF OUR TIME LOST. The season of boyhood—much of which was wasted in indolence; the season of youth—much of which was simply dissipated; the season of riper years—how much of that is being lost in the pursuit of shadows. Some misspend time because they have no proper object to engage their attention. How many fashionable people there are who are quite at a loss what to make of themselves. Others lose much time in mere delays and in expecting what will never come. IV. THE BEST MEANS OF REDEEMING IT. 1. Misspend no more. Treasure up scraps of time. He who is prodigal of a minute spends far above his estate. 2. Rise early. 3. Husband your time well during the day. (*T. Watson, B.A.*)

The redemption of time:—1. What is time? (1) Measured duration. Hours, days, &c., are measured by periodical revolutions. (2) Successive duration—past, present, to come. (3) Limited duration. Time was not, began, will cease. 2. Time is distinguished from eternity—which is absolute duration, without measure, &c. 3. But time in the text is rather special seasons and opportunities. 4. To redeem (1) in the common notion is to recover by some valuable consideration what has been forfeited—property, liberty, yea, our souls, by the precious blood of Christ. This cannot apply to time, because no consideration can recover the smallest portion of it when once gone. (2) In a moral sense we may redeem it by a careful, prayerful, religious improvement of what remains. Time ought to be improved because—

I. ITS VALUE IS INEXPRESSIBLE. We argue the worth of it—1. From the great business of it. (1) As regards self. Were man a mere animated piece of flesh and blood he would have some plausibility for saying "Let us eat and drink," &c. But he is a rational, immortal, and accountable being, and the great business of time is to get ready for eternity. It is not

necessary that we should be rich, great, honourable; but it is necessary that we should be saved. "What shall it profit," &c. (2) But we are not alone, and therefore our great business is not only to get but to do good; not only to work out our own salvation, but to promote that of others. 2. From the price of time. When man sinned all was lost, time included, but the forfeited blessing comes back through the death of Christ. 3. From the manner in which providence allots us time. Common things may be obtained in large quantities. Not so things that are precious—a grain of gold, *e.g.* So time is not dealt out in large portions. No man receives a year at once, only a moment. How should that moment, then, be improved. 4. Shall we consult the wise, great, and good on this subject. Moses (Psa. xc.): Solomon, "Remember now thy Creator; Christ, "I must work," &c.; that Pagan prince who, when a day had passed without a good deed, exclaimed, "I have lost a day." 5. Ask death-beds. "Doctor," said a dying man, "the whole of my estate for half-an-hour," but no, the whole of his estate could not purchase half a moment. 6. Travel to the regions of sorrow and despair. How would they hail a second probation! They had time, they abused it; their time is gone. 7. Travel to the mansions of light. The spirits of just men made perfect are there, because they redeemed the time for the purpose of preparing for eternity.

II. THE DURATION OF TIME IS SHORT. 1. How frequently we express ourselves incorrectly on this subject. A man who has been unwell for a few weeks says he has been ill a long time. But no portion of time is long in reference to eternity. There is some comparison between an atom and the globe, because the globe only contains so many atoms, but there can be no comparison between the little atom of time and unmeasurable eternity. 2. If time be short comparatively, what is the time of our life. "The time is short." How short. Before the flood some lived nearly one thousand years. After the flood there was a reduction. By the time of Moses the period was seventy or eighty. How few reach even that now. A friend of mine once ascertained the average age of persons buried in a country churchyard; it was fourteen years. Our life is but "a step between us and death"; "a hand-breadth"; "a weaver's shuttle"; "grass"; "a vapour." Then we have not a moment to waste.

III. MUCH OF OUR SHORT TIME HAS ELAPSED. 1. The morning of life has gone with many of us. Prize the morning of life, young people! It is the best part of the day. If it be wasted we have but little hope of subsequent periods. "In the morning sow thy seed." When it was morning with many of us how impatient we were to have it noon and be men. 2. Noon has come and gone, and it seems only yesterday that we were young. 3. Some are in the evening, the last mile-stone is in view, the taper must soon expire, and the hour-glass run out. A man may regain lost health, wealth, friends, but never time. Then how we ought to redeem what remains. IV. WHAT REMAINS IS UNCERTAIN. We can ascertain how much has been expended, not what is left. The rich fool talked of years. God did not talk of a single day. "This night." How numerous are sudden deaths. "Lord, teach us to number our days." V. NOTHING CAN COMPENSATE FOR THE LOSS OF TIME. A wise man will part with nothing except for its value, yet many part with time for nothing.

1. For folly, vanity, vice—time-consumers, time-killers. 2. For any kind of amusement-seeking customers to take it off their hands. 3. For business, at the expense of the true riches. 4. For honour, at the expense of heaven's patent of nobility. But none of us are absolutely bankrupt. Time remains—redeem it. VI. GOD HAS MADE ETERNITY TO DEPEND ON TIME. What an awful thing, then, to live. "Infinite joy or endless woe attends on every breath." (*Robert Newton, D.D.*)

The merchandise of time:—The word here translated "redeem" literally means to purchase in the market, and is quite different from the theological term, which means to re-purchase. Time is thus presented to us as a precious commodity.

I. THE OBLIGATIONS TO THE PRACTICE OF MAKING MERCHANDISE OF TIME. 1. On the mode in which we employ our time our everlasting destiny depends. One of the plainest principles of commerce is that any commodity is desirable in proportion to the returns it is capable of securing. The same principle applies here. The everlasting consequences which flow from it give to time transcendent value. Were it not for these we might say, "Let us eat and drink," &c. Just as a merchant, then, is most anxious about a profitable bargain so ought we to be about redeeming the time. 2. Time is short and uncertain. In commerce the rarity of an article enhances its value, and should any doubt exist as to another opportunity for procuring it the merchant is proportionably anxious to obtain it without delay. Had we for certain a considerable period to live in our neglect might be excused; but as it is we are bad spiritual

merchants if we fail to redeem the time. 3. Unless you check the progress of sin now it will become every day more difficult, and eventually become impossible. What merchant would allow an unprofitable line of business to lengthen out as men do the life of sin. He stops promptly, lest by delay all chance of retrieving his fortune should be gone. II. DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLYING WITH THE EXHORTATION.

1. Have a plan or system for the distribution of time. Every man of business knows the importance of pre-arrangement and method. How much more so is this on which hang such infinite issues. In your plan set aside time for devotion. 2. Beware of those things which rob you of the best portion of it. (1) Idleness. (2) Undue devotion to matters of subordinate importance. (3) Overdone amusements. 3. Watch for and improve those occasions in which you can best promote not only your own eternal interests but those of others, and particularly of your family. 4. Accustom yourselves to serious and impartial self-examination. Take stock as men of business do. (*P. Grant.*) *The right use of time*:—If this year is to be more valuable than the last, we must more carefully attend to the use of our time. I.

WHEN to use time rightly. 1. Now. The present moment is a king in disguise. 2. While it is ours. The past is a memory; the future, an undivided inheritance. 3. The present is the only moment which can be used. II. How to use time rightly. 1. By a circumspect walk. 2. By wisdom in its employment. 3. By helpful recreation. Avoid the two extremes of overwork and no work. 4. By the redemption of every fleeting moment. Take care of the seconds, and the hours will take care of themselves. Devote it all to God. III. WHY should we use time rightly? 1. Because of its value. The destiny of eternity hangs upon a moment of time. 2. The time is short. 3. When lost it can never be redeemed. 4. All that we have to do must be done quickly. 5. We shall have to account for our time. IV. LESSONS: 1. We shall make the most of time, if we work in it with zeal and diligence. 2. We should see to it that we are unrepensible in its use and in our work and recreation. 3. We should seek out, and not merely wait for, time in which to benefit others, or reprove the evils of our day. John the Baptist reprov'd Herod at the cost of his head; Jesus freely gave Himself for us all, and the disciples devoted their whole lifetime to teaching, preaching, exhorting, and re-proving. 4. We should learn to be more faithful in the use of the present, because so much of the past has run to waste. 5. Avoid procrastination and building air-castles. 6. Daily examine what use you have made of your time. V. ILLUSTRATIVE SCRIPTURES. Eccles. viii. 5, ix. 10, xii. 1; Rom. xii. 11; 1 Cor. vii. 29; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Gal. vi. 10; Eph. vi. 13; Col. iv. 5; James iv. 13-15; 1 Peter i. 17; Rev. xxii. 20. (*L. O. Thompson.*) *The value of time*:—The value set on time by the Duke of Wellington was one of his most marked characteristics. He once wrote to Dr. Hutton for information as to the scientific acquirements of a young officer who had been under his instructions. The doctor thought he could not do less than answer the question verbally, and made an appointment accordingly. Directly the Duke saw him he said, "I am obliged to you, doctor, for the trouble you have taken. Is—fit for the post?" Clearing his throat Dr. Hutton began, "No man more so; I can—"

"That's quite sufficient," said Wellington, "I know how valuable your time is; mine just now is equally so. I will not detain you any longer. Good-morning." On another occasion he made an appointment with a civic dignitary who was five minutes late, and on finding the Duke watch in hand and very angry, pleaded, "It is only five minutes, your grace." "Only five minutes!" he replied, "five minutes unpunctuality would have before now lost me a battle." Next time the magnate took care, as he thought, to be on the safe side. When the Duke appeared he greeted him rather triumphantly. "You see, your grace, I was five minutes before you this time." "Shows how little you know time's value," said the old Field-Marshal, "I am here to the moment. I cannot afford to waste five minutes." *The value of a minister's time*:—An American clergyman in the early part of his ministry, being in London, called upon the late Matthew Wilks. He received him with courtesy, and entered into conversation, which was kept up briskly, till the most important religious intelligence in possession of each was imparted. Suddenly there was a pause; it was broken by Mr. Wilks. "Have you anything more to communicate?" "No, nothing of special interest." "Any further inquiries to make?" "None." "Then you must leave me; I have my Master's business to attend to. Good-morning." "Here," says the minister, "I received a lesson on the impropriety of intrusion, and the most manly method of preventing it." (*W. Baxendale.*) *Wesley's economy of time*:—The diligence of Mr. Wesley in redeeming time has often been noticed; but it is scarcely possible for those who were not

intimate with him to have a just idea of his faithfulness in this respect. In many things he was gentle and easy to be entreated; in this, decided and inexorable. One day his chaise was delayed beyond the appointed time. He had put up his papers and left the apartment. While waiting at the door he was heard to say, "I have lost ten minutes for ever." (*Ibid.*) *Improve the moments*:—If we were to see a woodman felling eight large trees in a forest every week, or four hundred every year, we should some of us say, "What a pity!" yet in one large steam sawing-mill, visited by Mr. Mayhew, that was just the number employed to make lucifer matches, 1,123,200,000 matches were made in one year out of the above 400 trees! This may remind one of the remark of Howe, "What a folly it is to dread the thought of throwing away one's life at once, and yet to have no regard for throwing it away by parcels and piecemeal!" (*Bowes.*)

Ver. 6. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.—I. THE EXHORTATION. 1. What: Your speech. (1) It is not sufficient to order our life and actions well unless we at the same time regulate our words (James i. 26). (2) Not only is there danger of guilt and damnation from wicked actions, but from wicked speeches (James iii. 8; Prov. xviii. 21). (3) It is the mark of a perfect Christian to manage his discourse rightly (James iii. 2). 2. How long: always. Whenever we speak we must speak as we ought. Hence they are to be reproved who only speak soberly before grave men, or in affliction. While in their banquets, or private conversation, they regard it as a privilege to talk obscurely or foolishly. 3. In what manner: with grace as it were seasoned with salt, *i.e.*, with religious prudence flowing from the Holy Spirit, which first directs the heart, then the tongue. (1) As salt extracts noxious humours and banishes putrescency from meat, so the grace of wisdom represses idle language, and represses wicked and impure (Eph. iv. 20.) (2) As salt is helpful to digestion, so wisdom is suited to edification (Eccles. xii. 10.) 4. Instructions: (1) No discourse of Christians ought to be insipid; but that is deemed as unsavoury which is either hurtful or unprofitable. (2) It is not sufficient to season our speech with any any kind of salt, but we must do it with the salt of wisdom. The salt of satirical virulence must be discarded, and that of jocularity be used sparingly. (3) They are altogether destitute of this salt who blab out words—(a) corrupting the mind by heresy and doubt; (b) corrupting the heart by obscure or irreligious sayings. For it is the office of salt to restrain not to promote corruption. II. THE AMPLIFICATION. 1. The fountain of sound speech: knowledge drawn from the Word of God, laid up in the speaker's mind. "That ye may know." 2. Its use—"that it may be answered to every man as it is fit," *i.e.*, (1) To unbelievers requiring a reason of our faith, constantly and prudently, lest we expose religion to ridicule. (2) To heretics impugning the faith, vigorously and bravely to maintain religion. (3) To the ignorant, that we may impart saving knowledge. (4) To the afflicted, that we may minister comfort. 3. Corollaries: (1) All Christians must endeavour to obtain that knowledge of Divine things which may guide them to render a reason for their faith (1 Pet. iii. 15; 2 Cor. viii. 7). (2) Hence the wickedness and folly of Romanists who would take away the salt of the Divine Word from the people. (*Bp. Davenant.*) *Gracious speech*:—I. THE PRECEPT deals with the properties of speech. 1. Graciousness. (1) In respect to the cause good words are gracious. (a) Because they flow from the free grace of God without our merit, for we do not deserve to be trusted with a single good word. Reason yields us conceits, and nature an instrument to speak by, but it is the God of nature by His free grace that gives us good words. (b) Our words ought to proceed from some grace of God in the heart, as from knowledge, faith, joy, love, sorrow, fear, &c., and in this sense, when on the tongue, they carry the name of the fountain whence they flow. (2) In respect of the subject: the matter we talk of must be good, words of instruction, comfort, faith, hope, &c., and all seasoned by the daily memory and mention of God's grace to us in Christ (Psa. xl. 11.) (3) In respect of the effect: such as tend to build up and minister grace to the hearers (Eph. iv. 29). (a) Fair words. (b) Inoffensive words and not railing, bitter, slanderous, blasphemous, or filthy: no, nor even such jesting words as irritate, disgrace, and bite. (c) Seasonable words (Prov. xv. 23). (d) Wholesome words (Eph. iv. 29). 2. Powdered with salt. The reference is to the salt of sacrifice, and the salt of preservation. (1) It is implied that there are corrupt words which want seasoning. (a) The talk of the covetous is of mammon. (b) Epicures talk of sports and pleasures. (c) The superstitious of the signs of heaven, &c. (d) The wrathful of vengeance. (e) The ambitious of their pros-

pects. (2) Christians must season this corruption. (a) There is the salt of doctrine, whereby those who have it become the salt of the earth. (b) The salt of mortification, which every Christian must have in himself. (c) The salt of discretion (James iii. 2). II. THE END OF THE PRECEPT—"That ye may know how to answer." Observe, in general, that by speaking well we learn to speak well; and that the soundest knowledge is experimental. He knows not how to answer that practice himself, no matter how many arguments he may have in his head. To answer does not always mean to reply, but sometimes to continue to speak (Matt. xi. 25). 1. As to answering unbelievers. Notice—(1) True grace is sure to be opposed; let therefore every Christian expect it, and be prepared for it. (2) Every Christian ought to answer for the truth wherever and by whomsoever, opposed. (3) It is not easy to answer well, therefore note the requisities—(a) Deliberation and understanding of the matter. (b) Prayer (Prov. xvi. 1; Habak. ii. 1). (c) Faith in God's favour and promise (Matt. x. 19; Psal. cxix. 41–42). (d) Discretion concerning time, place, occasion, persons (Prov. xxv. 11; xxvi. 4, 6). (e) Patience. (f) Humility. (g) A good conscience (1 Pet. 15, 16). 2. As to answering believers, observe that—(1) Christians should propound their doubts one to another. (2) Strong Christians should help the weak with instruction and arguments (Rom. ii. 19). (3) However hard all answers should be gracious, seasonable, and profitable. (4) Custom in gracious speech breeds, by God's blessing, an ability to give sound judgment, advice, and resolution of doubts. It is not wit, learning, or authority, that breeds this. (*N. Byfield.*) *The right use of speech:*—When we consider the importance of speech, the ease with which we speak, and the pleasure we derive from this faculty, no wonder so much labour has been taken to improve it. Hundreds of rhetoricians have giving rules respecting "the art of speaking well." But that is really a Christian grace. Christianity alone lays down the fundamental rules of good speaking, and puts us in the way of doing most good with the talent of speech. I. THE PRECEPT shows—1. The character of Christian converse. It must be gracious. (1) Good words flow from grace no less than good deeds. When God gave you a new heart He gave you a new tongue. Words are the pictures of thought, and "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." When grace is in the heart means will be employed to forward the work of grace in others (Psal. lvi. 16). (2) Speech is always to be with grace, not now and then. How many Christians there are whose words at times are all they ought to be, and at others the reverse. 2. Its properties—"seasoned with salt." (1) Salt is an article of food, so our conversation should be morally and intellectually nutritive. (3) Salt gives a relish to ordinary food. How helpful may converse be in making the dry monotones of life and the hard fare of affliction palatable. (3) Salt preserves, and so should speech preserve the family, neighbourhood, country. How many a family, society, nation, have been preserved from corruption by the wise counsels of a father, citizen, statesman. (4) Salt heals (2 Kings ii. 21), and so a few gracious words of meekness have healed the most serious breaches. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." II. THE END AND USE OF THE PRECEPT—"That ye may know," &c. How much wisdom is needed for this. Many a good man has done much mischief for want of prudence here; by ill-timed zeal, dogmatism, offensive statement of truth, wrangling discussion. For the better ordering of speech—1. Consider the end of it. Speech was not given to man for God's sake. He can tell the meaning of the heart without words; nor for our own sakes—it is unnecessary for the perception of individual wants; but for the benefit of others. Recollect, then, when you open your lips that it should be for the good of those who hear you. 2. Meditate before speaking. "If you think twice before you speak once, you will speak twice the better for it." 3. Be moderate in speech. It is evident by the design of providence that the faculty of speech should be used less than most others. We have but one tongue, but two ears, two eyes, &c. "Let thy words be few." "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." "A fool is known by the multitude of words." The weakest minds are often the most garrulous; they unconsciously make up in number of words what they lack in wisdom; whereas the wisest try to say much in few words. There is far the most depth where there is least noise. (*T. Watson, B.A.*) *Conversation:*—I. By SPEECH WITH GRACE the apostle does not mean what is so often miscalled religious conversation. This is good in fit time and place, and to proper persons. But it is distasteful and injurious when obtruded unseasonably; worthless when it runs into perplexing technicalities; offensive when it degenerates into unmeaning cant; mischievous when it feeds the habit of morbid introspection. But there is

a grace which, blending with speech, on all sorts of subjects and occasions, may make the whole intercourse of life religious. Our Saviour at Bethany would not talk with His friends only on God and heaven, but about their earthly concerns and friends; yet there was that in all His words which indicated Him as the Holy One of God. The traits of grace which should mark the conversations of Christians are—1. Truth. The Christian has, of course, put away lying; yet there are excellent persons who are careless as to exact and literal truth, on whose lips a surmise takes the place of a fact, and who, while they would not for their right hand make a lie for themselves, are not equally scrupulous about lies made by others, or those which grow from tongue to tongue. Yet there is no deviation from truth which may not either do mischief to others, or reflect on him who gives it currency. How few confine themselves to what they know! There are so many things outside this limit which give zest to social intercourse; while literal speech is so jejune and dull. Yet speech thus weighed may save from fearful complicity in evil. 2. Sincerity—(1) in the expression of opinions. On many subjects on which the clear utterance of all who think soberly would be as efficient in demolishing the wrong and establishing the right as Joshua's trumpet blast, good men pause to listen when they ought to speak, or speak ambiguously so that their words may seem to favour the winning side. Hence public opinion on subjects of prime importance is manufactured by those interested in the wrong. No moral force is so mighty as outspoken Christian opinion. It is a trust, therefore, for the common good, and should be used—(2) In the expression of feeling. Silence or sincerity should be the alternative. Bad feeling ought not to be uttered, but while it rankles in the heart it ought not to be forced into hypocritical utterance. Let the artifice which gives truth-like expression to the proper feelings we do not feel be exchanged into the endeavour to suppress in our hearts all we should blush to utter. But every genuine emotion demands and merits unconstrained expression. Admiration, enthusiasm, love of beauty, all kindly sympathies, by natural and hearty utterance gain strength, and bless those who speak and those who hear; while he who keeps right feelings under a perpetual restraint becomes the cold and passionless clod he tries to seem. 3. Kindness. (1) The tongue is the chief instrument of and hindrance to charity. What is charity without it? It is only the very abject that can enjoy mere alms, and what is coldly or chidingly given starves and chills the soul while it feeds and warms the body: whereas there are words which bless even the poor more than gifts, by imparting inspiration and awakening hope. (2) In ordinary social life, too, kind speech is demanded beyond all other forms of kindness. More unhappiness is caused through unkind speech than through all else combined. What beneficent agency can be compared with that of him or her in whose ears all scandal lies buried, and whose lips are hollowed for gentle ministries of encouragement and refinement. (3) It is not enough that we pull up all roots of bitterness from the heart. There is not a little of unkind speech that is not meant to be so. The fibres of human feeling are tremulously sensitive to our unskilled touch. 4. Modesty. "In honour preferring one another" is a rule for conversation. The opinionativeness which always knows it is right and everybody else wrong; self-assertion, the ambition for effect barely tolerable in genius are disgusting in mediocrity. Mutual instruction and entertainment are the chief uses of conversation, and these ends are defeated when one assumes as his the right to be an oracle. 5. Reverence. When the tone of reverence is low, there is a vicious tendency to introduce sacred things to give raciness to an anecdote, or to point a jest. But when the natural track of conversation leads near the oracles of God, there should always be in our speech that which corresponds to the taking off of the shoes of our feet on holy ground. II. SPEECH SEASONED WITH SALT, *i.e.*, not insipid, as talk is that is only negatively good. 1. Its importance. It is frequently lack of salt that has brought religious conversation into disrepute. The more grace there is in the words the more salt do they need to make them palatable, and to render them worthy of themes so high. In the intercourse of daily life there is a willingness merely to fill up the time with a continuous flow of words, no matter with how little wit or sense or even freshness. But the Christian should regard the capacity for conversation as a talent to be employed for precious uses. More than anything else it makes home attractive, gives a charm to society, and counteracts, when well employed, the charm of vicious society. 2. Its cultivation. In order to talk well (1) we must not enter into conversation lazily and listlessly. It is not thus that we engage in other recreations, the best of which are only varied employments. (2) We need to train ourselves and should

keep ourselves abreast of current topics, and so exercise our minds upon them that we may not reproduce the hackneyed commonplaces of the press and street. (3) We need to read much and well with a view of being conversant with what everybody is ready to talk about, and to have our own speciality from which we can contribute to the common stock of knowledge. (4) Then as to conversational power there is the widest difference between him who moves ever as in a blind study, and him who goes through life with his eyes and ears wide open. The incidents of a walk through crowded streets or country lanes, the treasured experiences of distant travel, the curious information gleaned from transient fellow-wayfarers, the contents of an old book may add largely to one's materials for pleasant and appetising conversation. (5) We must throw ourselves unreservedly into social intercourse instead of keeping up our own insulated trains of thought, listening by snatches, and answering at haphazard. If we want to meditate let it be in solitude. If we talk, that is our work for the time being, and let us put our best into it. If the theme be grave, let it have our ripest thoughts in well-weighted utterance; if gay, let us contribute what we can of mirth. III. But with the salt never forget the grace. Not mere amusement is the Christian's aim, but edification, *i.e.*, building up the social edifice with its substantial foundation, frame, and walls of solid principle, with its firm fretwork and tracery that shall lack no element of beauty. There are occasions on which he must speak directly in defence of the truth and plead his Master's cause, and sometimes deal out rebuke. But there are more numerous occasions when, with a heart always loyal, he can serve the cause of virtue much more efficiently by talking on common subjects in a Christian way, and by dropping unostentatiously, ever and anon, a word in season that may be a seed-thought for a spiritual harvest. (*A. P. Peabody, D.D.*) *Christ's truth in relation to our daily conversation*.—I. THE LARGE SPACE WHICH WORDS OCCUPY IN HUMAN LIFE. 1. On account of their number. Great part of human life is passed in talking. How many millions of words are uttered in the course of a long human life. 2. On account of their consequences. There are many things which are very easy to do, but the effects of which will last for ages. It is easy to sow an acorn, it is soon done; but the growth of the acorn is not soon done; it becomes an oak, which will defy the tempests of a thousand years. The conflagration of Chicago was very soon done. II. THE IMPORTANCE OF SPECIAL SELF-EXAMINATION IN REFERENCE TO OUR WORDS. III. EARNEST LISTENING TO THE DIVINE VOICES, THE CURE FOR VAIN SPEECH AND THE SOURCE OF GRACIOUS SPEECH. 1. The cure for vain speech. St. James says, "Be ye swift to hear, slow to speak." 2. The source of gracious speech. IV. OUR WORDS ARE NOT TO BE ALL ABOUT RELIGION, BUT TO BE PERVADED BY THE SPIRIT OF RELIGION. V. OUR CONVERSATION BEING THUS SEASONED, WE SHALL KNOW HOW WE OUGHT TO ANSWER EVERY MAN. (*R. Abercrombie, M.A.*) *Speech seasoned with salt*.—That does not mean the "Attic salt of wit." There is nothing more wearisome than the talk of men who are always trying to be piquant and brilliant. Such speech is like a "pillar of salt," it sparkles, but is cold, and has points that wound, and it tastes bitter. That is not what Paul recommends. I. SALT WAS USED IN SACRIFICE. Let the sacrificial salt be applied to all our words, *i.e.*, let all we say be offered to God, "a sacrifice of praise to God continually." II. SALT PRESERVES. Put into your speech what will keep it from rotting. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." Frivolous talk, dreary gossip, ill-natured, idle, to say nothing of foul and wicked words, will be silenced when your speech is seasoned with salt. III. SALT GIVES SAVOUR TO FOOD. Do not deal in insipid generalities, but suit your words to your hearers, "that ye may know," &c. Speech that fits close to the characteristics and wants of the people to whom it is spoken is sure to be interesting, but that which does not will for them be insipid. Commonplaces that hit full against the hearer will be no commonplaces to him, and the most brilliant words that do not meet his minds or needs will to him be tasteless "as the white of an egg." Individual peculiarities, then, must determine the wise way of approach to each man, and there will be a wide variety of methods. Paul's language to the wild hill tribes of Lycaonia was not the same as to the cultivated, curious crowd on Mars Hill, and his sermons in the synagogues have a different tone from his reasonings before Felix. IV. SALT HAS TO BE RUBBED IN if it is to do any good. Preaching to a congregation has its own place and value; but private and personal talk, honestly and wisely done, will effect more than the most eloquent preaching. Better to drill the seeds, dropping them one by one into the little pits made for their reception, than to sow them broadcast. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Seasoning a letter*.—

I have read of a lady who, writing to a young man in the navy, thought, "Shall I close this as anybody would, or shall I say a word for my Master?" and, lifting up her heart for a moment, she wrote, telling him that his constant change of scene and place was an apt illustration of the Word, "Here we have no continuing city," and asked if he could say, "I seek one to come." Trembling she folded it, and sent it off. Back came the answer: "Thank you so much for those kind words. I am an orphan, and no one has spoken to me like that since my mother died, long years ago." The arrow, shot at venture, hit home, and the young man shortly after rejoiced in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.

A word spoken in season:—A clergyman sailing up the Hudson River in a sloop, some forty years since, was pained by the profaneness of a young man. Seeking a favourable opportunity, he told him he had wounded his feelings by speaking against his best friend—the Saviour. The young man showed no relents, and at one of the landings left the boat. Seven years after, as this clergyman went to the General Assembly at Philadelphia, a young minister accosted him, saying he thought he remembered his countenance, and asked him if he was not on board a sloop on the Hudson River, seven years before, with a profane young man. "I," said he, "am that young man. After I left the sloop I thought I had injured both you and your Saviour. I was led to Him for mercy, and I felt that I must preach His love to others. I am now in the ministry, and have come as a representative to this Assembly." (*British Workman.*) *Salt:*—Do not mistake vinegar for oil, or pepper for salt. "Seasoned with salt." Let it be tasteful and savoury. I read, quite lately, a most striking incident, showing the power of grace seasoned with salt in speaking a timely word to one that was without. An officer in your army was led to help a lady who was an earnest worker among soldiers. One evening, after helping at a soldiers' tea, he came to her, evidently much excited, and said, "I have almost made up my mind that I will never come here again." She expressed, of course, her regret, and asked what had happened. "Oh, So-and-so has been at me about coming here as I do, and being such a card-player as I am. But I can't give up my cards; that I shall never do." "Oh," said the lady, "I am sorry that you have been spoken to in that way. You can't give up your cards. I should never ask you to do that. Why, it is all you have got. You must have something." Well, that was "grace seasoned with salt," for it brought him to himself. He saw that if that card-playing was taken from him he had nothing left; and he had no rest until the love of Jesus had delivered him from the love of the world. (*A. Monod, D.D.*) *A turn in the talk:*—I shall never forget the way a thirsty individual once begged of me on Clapham Common. I saw him with a very large truck in which he was carrying a very small parcel, and I wondered why he had not put the parcel in his pocket and left the machine at home. I said, "It looks odd to see so large a truck for so small a load." He stopped, and, looking me seriously in the face, he said, "Yes, sir, it is a very odd thing; but do you know I have met with an odder thing than that this very day. I have been about working and sweating all this 'ere blessed day, and till now I haven't met a single gentleman that looked as if he'd give me a pint of beer till I saw you." I considered that turn in the conversation very neatly managed; and we, with a far better subject upon our minds, ought to be equally able to introduce the topic on which our heart is set. There was an ease in the man's manner which I envied, for I did not find it quite so simple a matter to introduce my own topic to his notice; yet if I had been thinking as much about how I could do him good as he had upon how to obtain a drink, I feel sure I should have succeeded in reaching my point. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Wise words spoken in reason:*—Travelling by diligence from Geneva to Dôle with a Roman Catholic, I said to him, simply, "I should like to speak to you about your soul, but I don't know how to go about it." "Well, sir, go on," said the man, heartily. I continued, or rather we continued, and, on leaving him, I had the happiness of hearing him thank God for having made some one speak to him of salvation, and he begged me to send him a Bible. In general, I have found that if one commences a conversation of this kind with kindness and politeness, one will be always listened to. This is, besides, the only way to succeed. (*C. Malan.*) *Religion in conversation:*—"What awakened you?" said a Christian minister on one occasion to a young friend. "It was what you said to me one evening coming out of the lecture-room. As you took me by the hand, you said, 'Mary, one thing is needful.' You said nothing else, and passed on; but I could not forget it." It was a word spoken in the Spirit, and the Lord accompanied it with saving power. The sculptor, Bacon, being an earnest Christian, used to

seek opportunities of introducing religion into his conversation. On one of these occasions, the lady he addressed, said, "As to that, my religion is to fear God, and keep His commandments; so we will talk no more on such matters." Bacon replied, "But, madam, you will recollect it is said, 'they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.'" (*J. F. B. Tinling.*)

Vers. 7-11. All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you.—*Christian commendations and salutations* :—"What is in a name!" Nothing, is the ordinary reply, but there may be much. The names of Solomon, Alexander, Napoleon, and Paul are associated with important events in history. Each is a record, and stirs up admiration, desire, dislike, or sorrow as the case may be. If the names of great men interest us, those of the good men who shared the labours of St. Paul may also do so. Those labours are more important than the conquests of captains and the speculations of philosophers. Note—I. THE VALUE OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP. True friendship will—1. Show a kindly interest in the welfare of its objects. Paul had such an interest in the Colossians and *vice versa*. 2. Mutual interest will lead to reciprocal communications. Paul could not go to Colossæ so he sent Tychicus and Onesimus to inform them of himself and the affairs of Christ's kingdom, to comfort them and bring back a report. 3. Distance and difficulty will not be allowed to stand in the way. Colossæ was far off and Paul was in prison, but both were surmounted. 4. Written messages will not be allowed to supersede personal communications when the latter are practicable. So Paul sent his Epistle by trusted friends who were charged also with verbal communications, better spoken than written. II. THE PROPRIETY OF CHRISTIAN COMMENDATIONS. In naming the two messengers he speaks of them in high terms, but not in the style of fulsome eulogy. 1. Tychicus is (1) "a beloved brother" which indicates his relation to the Church. (2) "Faithful minister," or attendant, which indicates his relation to the Apostle as a trusty helper. (3) "Fellow servant in the Lord," which indicates his relation to Christ—a coadjutor of the apostle in the service of the same Master. 2. Onesimus, the whilom runaway slave, is now a faithful and beloved brother—a commendation which would secure for him the welcome that he sorely needed. 3. The spirit of this commendation should be cultivated. The true ground of honour is not in a man's social standing, but in his moral worth and relation to Christ. III. THE FORCE OF CHRISTIAN SALUTATIONS. 1. Christianity sanctifies the commonest things. How common for us to send our respects to some friend through the letter of another. "Give him my kind regards," &c. We have only to think of St. Paul as here using the expressions equivalent in his day. Little did these good men think that their simple expressions of affection would be handed down to prove the sympathy and the unity of the Church throughout the world and time. 2. The saluting brethren were Jews, which would show to the Gentile Church that they had learned what the apostle would teach them, not to call anything that God had cleansed common or unclean. IV. THE SOLACE OF CHRISTIAN CO-OPERATION. 1. Loneliness is very depressing, but the apostle was spared this. 2. Co-operation in labour divides its burden and ensures success. 3. Unity in Christian toil brings the greatest in touch with the humblest, and gives the humblest a share in the glory of the greatest. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Side lights on Church life in the early times* :—A straw will indicate the direction of a current; a bit of glass will reveal a star; a kick of the foot may discover a treasure; a word, a look, an involuntary movement will disclose the leading tendency of an individual character; so, on the crowded stage of life it is not always gigantic and public scenes that are most instructive, but rather trivial, undesigned incidents unnoticed by an ordinary observer. We learn—I. CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY. 1. As fostering mutual interest in tidings concerning the work of God. The apostle, though in prison and separated from the Colossians, does not abate anything of his interest in their welfare. 2. As a source of encouragement and strength in the Christian life. "That he might know your estate and comfort your heart." II. CHRISTIAN COMMENDATION (ver. 7). The apostle speaks of his two messengers in a way calculated to ensure their favourable reception by the Colossians, and a respectful attention to their message. III. CHRISTIAN COURTESY. Those who sent their salutations were of the circumcision. The Christian spirit triumphed over their prejudices, and their greeting would be all the more valued as an expression of their personal esteem, their brotherly affection, and their oneness in Christ. That courtesy is most refined, graceful, gentle, and acceptable that springs from a Christian spirit. IV. CHRISTIAN HELPFULNESS (ver. 11). How consoling is the

sympathy and co-operation of a faithful few. (*G. Barlow.*) *The sympathetic spirit.* I. OUT OF A COMMON FAITH IN CHRIST SPRINGS A COMMON SYMPATHY. Here is a man who never saw the Colossians writing to them as a mother might write to her son. Epaphras, not he, had brought them to Christ, yet he loves them as much as though they had been his own children in the faith. This arose out of the simple fact that they both believed in a common Saviour. And as it was with them it should be with us. Man is a social being, and there are many points in his nature which are sympathetic. There are intellectual affinities and moral affinities; besides which there are extra grounds of sympathy. But apart from blood relationships there is no sphere in which the sympathetic spirit works so mightily as in the Christian Church. The same faith incites us believers of the nineteenth century as incited those of the first. Our faith was theirs: their sympathy should be ours. II. CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY WILL SEEK AND FIND OUTLET AND MANIFESTATION. 1. Paul's heart is touched with sympathy; how can he show it. He is a prisoner. It is true he clings to the hope of revisiting Asia, but sympathy does not like delays. And as he cannot go himself he sends Tychicus as his deputy. Here, as in other things, "Where there's a will there's a way." 2. Where there is genuine sympathy the best way for its manifestation will somehow open up. That was the case here. Tychicus was an Asiatic (Acts xx. 4), and was therefore a convenient messenger. Perhaps he had offered himself for the mission. And besides, Onesimus had to go to Colossæ to his master. III. CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY IS HARD TO SATISFY. When it is at full heat it does not ask how little, but how much 't may do. The letter itself indicates the deepest thought and care for their welfare; but this is not enough. Tychicus and Onesimus must be bearers of oral messages of comfort. You manifest sympathy as you run down a steep hill. When once you set off you must go on; only there is this difference, when the foot of the hill is reached you stop, but in the path of love there is no stopping. IV. THE SYMPATHETIC SPIRIT WILL AS A RULE ACT WISELY. The messenger in this case was the best who could have been selected. 1. He was "the beloved brother" (Eph. vi. 21); a brother who had a large heart, and who, consequently, had insinuated himself into the good graces of his fellow Christians. He was a favourite among them, they all liked him, and so he was just the man to send. 2. He was "a faithful minister." The apostle speaks from personal experience. Tychicus had taken care of Paul, and was therefore a tried man. His conscience was as large as his heart; his kindness was not at the expense of his justice. Faithfulness was needed at Colossæ as much as kindness, for Paul had a great conflict about that Church. 3. "A fellow servant." Whoever went to Colossæ must be armed with authority, and therefore Paul places the messenger on the same footing as himself. V. THE SYMPATHETIC SPIRIT IS BOTH CONTAGIOUS AND INFECTIOUS. Some things are contagious which are not infectious; sympathy is both. Tychicus and Onesimus caught it; it was conveyed to the distant Colossians. I can touch my neighbour and make him sympathetic too, i.e., if there be any affinity between us; and I can also send its electric current to my friend thousands of miles away. It can be transmitted by the simplest implement—a pen. VI. THE SYMPATHETIC SPIRIT NEVER FAILS. It is a form of charity. It is like the sun—only let it shine on, and as it shines stronger and stronger, the hard frost will relax its deadly grasp, winter will disappear, and spring with its flowers and music will come. VII. WE CAN ALL ACQUIRE THE SYMPATHETIC SPIRIT. There is nothing to show that Tychicus was a great man. He was not an apostle, but he had a large warm heart. If we cannot render Christ head service we can heart service. (*A. Scott.*) *Tychicus and Onesimus, the letter bearers:—*I. TYCHICUS. 1. The man and his mission. He was probably one of the fruits of the apostle's residence in Ephesus. On his way to Jerusalem after the riot he was joined by seven friends. Tychicus was one of the two from Asia; the other was Trophimus, whom we know to have been an Ephesian (Acts xxi. 29), as Tychicus probably was. This was about 58 A.D. Then came an interval of three or four years, and then the apostle is in Rome. Whether Tychicus was with him all the time we do not know, but these verses, written A.D. 62 or 63, imply a considerable period of service. He is now sent to Colossæ. The same words are employed about him in the contemporaneous letter to the Ephesians. Evidently, then, he carried both letters on the same journey, and one reason was that he was a native of the province, and probably of Ephesus. "You go, Tychicus. It is your home; they all know you." The most careful students now think that the Ephesian Epistle was meant to go the round of the Churches of Asia Minor, beginning with Ephesus. If that be so Tychicus would necessarily come to Laodicea,

which was only a few miles from Colossæ, and so could conveniently deliver this Epistle. After this we get two more glimpses of the man; one in the Epistle to Titus, when the apostle intended to despatch him to Crete, and the last in 2 Tim. iv. 2 (A.D. 67). "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus," as if he had said, "Now go home, my friend! You have been a faithful servant for ten years. I need you no more. Take my blessing. God be with you!" So they parted—he that was for death to die! and he that was for life, to live and treasure the memory of Paul for the rest of his days.

2. His character and work. (1) As for his personal godliness and goodness, he is "a beloved brother," as are all who love Christ. (2) He was "a faithful minister" or personal attendant. Paul always seems to have had one or two such about him. Probably he was no great hand at managing affairs, and needed a plain common-sense nature to act as secretary and factotum. Men of genius, and men devoted to some great cause, want some person to fill such a homely office. Common sense, willingness to be troubled with small secular details, and hearty love for the chief, and desire to spare him, were the qualifications. Such probably was Tychicus—no orator, thinker, organizer, but a plain soul who did not shrink from rough work if it would help the cause. (3) He was "a fellow-servant in the Lord." As if he had said, "Do not suppose there is much difference between us. We have both, as I have been reminding you, a common Master." The delicacy of the term thus given to the commendation is a beautiful indication of Paul's chivalrous nature. No wonder that such a soul bound men like Tychicus to him.

3. Lessons. (1) Small things done for Christ are great. In some powerful engine there is a little screw, and if it drop out the huge piston cannot rise nor the huge crank turn. There is a great rudder that steers an iron-clad. It moves on a "pintle" a few inches long. If that bit of iron were gone what would be the use of the ship. There is an old jingle about losing a shoe for the want of a nail, a horse for want of a shoe, a man for want of a horse, a battle for want of a man, a kingdom for loss of a battle. The intervening links may be left out—and the nail and the kingdom brought together. What is the use of writing letters if you cannot get them delivered? It takes both Paul and Tychicus to get the letter into the hands of the Colossians. (2) The sacredness of secular work done for Christ. When Tychicus is caring for Paul, his work is "in the Lord." The distinction between sacred and secular, like that of great and small, disappears from work done for and in Jesus. All done for the same God is the same in essence, for it is all worship. (3) Fleeting things done for Christ are eternal. How astonished Tychicus would have been if anybody had told him that those two precious letters in his scrip would outlast all the pomp of the city, and that his name, because written in them, would be known to the end of time all over the world. (a) They are eternal in Christ's memory, however they may fall from man's remembrance. (b) They are perpetual in their consequences. True, no man's contribution to the sum of righteousness can very long be traced, any more than the rain-drop that refreshed the harebell can be traced in a burn, or river, or sea; but it is there. The Colossian Church, with its sisters, is gone; but Christian men all over the world owe something to Tychicus' care. Paul meant to teach a handful of obscure believers; he has edified a world. (4) As the reward is given not to the outward deed, but to the motive which settles its value, all work done from the same motive is alike in reward, however different in form. Paul in the front, Tychicus in the rear, shall share alike at last. "He that receiveth a prophet," &c. II. ONESIMUS. 1. The man and his character. He is the same as we read of in Philemon. He had been a good-for-nothing servant, and apparently had robbed his master and then fled to Rome. Somehow or other he had found Paul, and Paul's master had found him. And now he goes back to his owner. With beautiful consideration the apostle unites him with Tychicus, and refers the Church to him as an authority. But with sensitive regard he omits the "fellow-slave," which might have hurt, but he cannot leave out the "faithful," because Onesimus had been eminently unfaithful. There is no reference to his flight, &c. The Church has nothing to do with these, only Philemon. 2. Lessons. (1) The transforming power of Christianity. Slaves had well-known vices of which Onesimus had his full share. Think of him as he left Colossæ; and think of him as he went back Paul's trusted representative. What had happened? Nothing but this—the message had come to Him. "Onesimus! Christ has died for thee and lives to bless thee. Believest thou this?" And he believed. It had changed his whole being. He is a living illustration of Paul's teaching. He is dead with Christ to his old self; he lives with Christ a new life. The gospel can do that. Nothing else can. The

gospel despairs of none; none are beyond its power. (2) The power the gospel has of binding men into a true brotherhood. We can scarcely picture to ourselves the gulf which separated master from slave; Christianity gathered both into one family. All true union must be based on oneness in Christ. The world must recognize that "One is your Master," before it comes to believe that "All ye are brethren." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Tychicus* was a native of proconsular Asia (Acts xx. 4), and perhaps of Ephesus (2 Tim. iv. 12). He is found with St. Paul at three different epochs in his life. 1. He accompanied him when on his way eastward at the close of the third missionary journey, A.D. 58 (Acts xx. 4), and probably, like Trophimus (Acts xxi. 29), went with him to Jerusalem. It is probable that Tychicus, together with others mentioned among Paul's numerous retinue on this occasion, was a delegate appointed by his own Church according to the apostle's injunctions (1 Cor. xvi. 3-4), to bear the contributions of his brethren to the poor Christians of Judæa; and, if so, he may possibly be the person commended as "the brother," &c. (2 Cor. viii. 18). 2. We find Tychicus again in St. Paul's company here, probably towards the end of the first Roman captivity, A.D. 62, 63. 3. Once more at the close of St. Paul's life (about A.D. 67) he appears again to have associated himself with the apostle (Tit. iii. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 12). Tychicus is not so common a name as some others, but it is found occasionally in inscriptions which belong to Asia Minor, and persons bearing it are commemorated on coins (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) *Value of a comforter*.—But so have I seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with the images of death, and the colder breath of the north; and then the waters break from their enclosures, and melt with joy, and run in useful channels; and the flies do rise again from their little graves in walls, and dance a while in the air, to tell that there is joy within, and that the great Mother of creatures will open the stock of her new refreshment, become useful to mankind, and sing praises to her Redeemer. So is the heart of a sorrowful man under the discourses of a wise comforter. He breaks from the despairs of the grave, and the fetters and chains of sorrow; he blesses God, and he blesses thee, and he feels his life returning; for to be miserable is death, but nothing is life but to be comforted. And God is pleased with no music from below so much as in the thanksgiving songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing and comforted and thankful persons. (*Bp. Taylor.*)

Ver. 9. With Onesimus a faithful and beloved brother who is one of you.—I. THE PERSON. Onesimus teaches us—1. To despise no one for his former misdeeds after he has come to his right mind. This Onesimus was once contemptible, useless, and a runaway slave, but after his conversion he was thought worthy by the chiefest apostle of a mission of great honour. They therefore sin grievously who reproach the truly converted for their former evils, than to congratulate them on their new nature. God estimates men not by what they have put off, but by what they have put on (Ezek. xviii. 22). **II. HIS COMMENDATION.** 1. He is a faithful brother, *i.e.*, not only a Christian, but a genuine one; for many who have assumed the name have denied the thing (Gal. ii. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 2-4). Hence we may observe—(1) We should endeavour to answer to our name and profession; for to be called a Christian, faithful, &c., and not be so, is to be loaded with false titles and dishonourable (Rev. iii. 1). (2) They are to be loved by all the pious, and to be embraced with both arms who are faithful in their Christian profession and special vocation. (3) Nothing is more dangerous than those perfidious brethren who feign religion while they despise it (2 Cor. xi. 26). 2. He was loved warmly by Paul, who was not accustomed to receive any into intimate friendship except they were worthy. Therefore the apostle wished them to infer that Onesimus deserved to be beloved by them. (1) It is a sign of a good Christian to be dear to his pastor. (2) It becomes a prudent minister to embrace the most pious with peculiar affection (Phil. iv. 1). (3) It ought to be the care of all believers to be beloved by their pastors. 3. He was one of themselves. Although this was not much in his praise, it made him acceptable, for what is our own is wont to be prized more than what is not. (1) It is proper to treat, then, with peculiar affection those who are of the same blood, country, society, as ourselves. (2) It is contemptible to neglect our own, and to extol the distant at the expense of the near (Mark xiii. 57). **III. HIS MISSION.** To make known what was going on with the apostle and at Rome. Tychicus was also entrusted with the same, but in adding Onesimus he provided two witnesses that the thing might be established. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Onesimus* was a native, or certainly an inhabitant, of Colossæ, since Paul refers to him as "one of you."

This confirms the presumption which his name affords that he was a Gentile. Slaves were numerous in Phrygia, and the very name Phrygian was almost synonymous with that of slave. Hence it happened that in writing to the Colossians (iii. 22-iv. 1) Paul had to instruct them concerning the duties of servants and masters towards each other. Onesimus was one of this unfortunate class of persons, who escaped from his master and fled to Rome, where in the midst of its vast population he could hope to be concealed, and to baffle the efforts which were so often made in such cases for retaking the fugitive. Whether he had any other motive for the flight than the natural love of liberty we have not the means of deciding. It has been generally supposed that he had committed some offence, as theft or embezzlement, and feared the punishment of his guilt (Philemon 18). Though it may be doubted whether Onesimus heard the gospel for the first time in Rome, it is beyond question that he was led to embrace the gospel there through the apostle's instrumentality (Philemon 10). As there were believers in Phrygia when the apostle passed through the region on his third missionary journey (Acts xviii. 23), and as Onesimus belonged to a Christian household (Philemon 2), it is not improbable that he knew something of Christian doctrine before he went to Rome. How long a time elapsed between his escape and his conversion we cannot decide. After the latter event, however, the most happy and friendly relations sprang up between the teacher and the disciple. The situation of the apostle must have made him keenly alive to the sympathies of Christian friendship, and dependent upon others for various services. Onesimus appears to have supplied this want in an eminent degree. He won entirely the apostle's heart, and made himself so useful that Paul wished to keep him, and yielded him up only in obedience to that sensitive regard for the feelings and rights of others of which his conduct on this occasion was a conspicuous example. The traditional notices of Onesimus are not of great value. Some of the later fathers assert that Onesimus was set free and became Bishop of Bœrea, and that he made his way to Rome again and died a martyr under Nero. (*H. B. Hackett, D.D.*) *The excellence of faithfulness*.—A year ago last summer I visited Yellowstone Park. I had read a great deal of the geysers, and seen pictures of them, but now it was my privilege to see them rise grandly and proudly in dizzy heights, then fall in graceful spray. They had great names given them. Some were called "The Wonderful," "The Monarch," others "The Lion" and "The Lioness," but you never can depend on their regularity of action. A traveller may visit them and wait around four or five days without witnessing a performance, getting only labour for his pains, though you cannot tell when they will play. When they do they are very beautiful. But there is one geyser, named the "Old Faithful," that is not so large, and doesn't make such a grand display, but you can always depend on it. It plays at certain times, and never fails. If you are there at 1 o'clock, or five minutes before, you will see the water shoot up at a height of 60 or 70 feet. At 1.55 it will play again, not rising at such height as the other geysers, nor making such a roaring noise, but you can depend on it. It always comes to time, and never fails in a performance. I at once respected that geyser. It was faithful in its performance and sure. That is the key to a successful life. (*A. Little.*)

Vers. 10-11. Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, saluteth you.—The salutations:—
I. THE DUTY OF SALUTATION. The Greek word signifies either to embrace, as we are accustomed to do one who has been long absent, or to salute by word of mouth or letter. This salutation is the auspicious prayer of health and happiness from God the Author of all good. That this duty is not to be neglected by the Christian appears—1. From the command of Christ (Matt. x. 12). 2. From the uniform example of St. Paul. 3. From its manifold utility. For such a habit (1) not only expresses the mutual happiness which ought to flourish among Christians, but promotes it. (2) When flowing from a heart purified by faith and inflamed by love, brings down the wished-for blessing. **II. INFERENCES AND LESSONS.** Observe—1. That the external duties of humanity, of which salutation is one, are diligently to be performed by pious men. Augustine says, "If any one should not salute him whom he may meet, he will not be accounted a man by the traveller, but a post." 2. That they are to be performed not only in conformity with custom, but from love and pure charity. For he incurs the guilt of hypocrisy who salutes him whom he does not wish health and prosperity. So Judas saluted Christ (Matt. xxvi. 49). 3. That they sin who would have this duty of Christian charity to serve their pride and ambition. So the Pharisees loved salutations in the market places. 4. That

they act basely who instead of saluting perform an act of adulation. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Aristarchus* was a Thessalonian, and so perhaps one of Paul's early European converts (Acts xx. 4). He was a Jew, but like so many of his brethren of the dispersion, bore a Greek name. He was with Paul in Ephesus at the time of the riot, and was one of the two whom the excited mob dragged into the theatre to the peril of their lives. We next find him a member of the deputation which joined Paul on his voyage to Jerusalem. He was in Palestine with Paul, and sailed with him thence (Acts xxvii. 2). Probably he went home to Thessalonica at some point of the journey, rejoining Paul subsequently. At any rate, here he is standing by Paul and enthusiastically devoted to his work. He receives here an honourable and remarkable title, "my fellow-prisoner." Now it is to be noted that in the Epistle to Philemon, where almost all these names reappear, it is not *Aristarchus* but *Epaphras* who is honoured by this epithet, and that interchange has been explained by a supposition that Paul's friends took it in turn to keep him company, and were allowed to live with him on condition of submitting to the same restrictions and military guardianship. There is no positive evidence in favour of this, but it is not improbable, and helps to give an interesting glimpse of Paul's prison life, and of the loyal devotion which surrounded him. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Marcus*—the John Mark of the Acts. He was once the subject of a sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas, which issued in the separation of these good men (Acts xv. 37-39). On a missionary tour previous to that painful occasion, Mark had left them, perhaps unhandsomely (Acts xiii. 13); and Paul, to indicate his sense of Mark's conduct, refused to take him with them on a subsequent occasion. Barnabas, being a near kinsman, may have been prejudiced in favour of his relative. What were the commands regarding him which the Colossians had already received it is in vain for us to conjecture. Mark evidently contemplated a journey which would lead him to Colossæ, and the Colossians are here enjoined to give him a cordial reception. The apostle thereby intimates the restoration of Mark to his full confidence. The cloud under which his character for zeal had lain seems to have quite passed away. A single error, even in one engaged in the public ministry, is not enough to warrant the entire withdrawal of confidence. But why this mention of Mark in relation to a Church with which he had no special connection? It was at Perga in Pamphylia that Mark left the apostle, and as Colossæ was not far away from the sphere of the subsequent labours of the missionaries, Mark's defection and Paul's displeasure could not fail to be generally known. It was beautiful and proper, therefore, that having in the interval seen reason to receive Mark again into favour, the apostle should make this change known, and give the Churches of Phrygia a charge to receive him with due confidence and cordiality as a faithful evangelist for Christ. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Jesus* which is called *Justus*.—How startling to come across that name borne by this obscure Christian! How it helps us to feel the humble manhood of Christ, by showing us that many another Jewish boy bore the same name: common and undistinguished then, though too holy to be given to any since. His surname *Justus*, may perhaps, like the same name given to James, hint his rigorous adherence to Judaism, and so may indicate that like Paul himself, he came from the strictest sect of their religion into the large liberty in which he now rejoiced. He seems to have been of no importance in the Church, for his name is the only one in this context which does not re-appear in Philemon, and we never hear of him again. A strange fate his! to be made immortal by three words, and because he wanted to send a loving message to Colossæ! Why men have striven and schemed and broken their hearts, and flung away their lives to grasp the bubble of posthumous fame; and how easily this good "Jesus which is called *Justus*" has got it! He has his name written for ever on the world's memory, and he very likely never knew it, and does not know it, and was never a bit the better for it! What a satire on "the last infirmity of noble minds!" (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) Who are of the circumcision.—These three men, the only three Jewish Christians in Rome who had the least sympathy with Paul and his work, give us in their isolation a vivid illustration of the antagonism which he had to face from that portion of the Early Church. The bulk of the Palestinian Jewish Christians held that the Gentiles must pass through Judaism on their road to Christianity, and as the champion of Gentile liberty Paul was worried and hindered by them all his life. They had next to no missionary zeal, but they followed him and made mischief wherever they could. If we can fancy some modern sect that sends out no missionaries of its own, but delights to come in where better men have forced a passage, and upset their work by preaching their own crochets, we get

precisely the thing which dogged St. Paul. There was evidently a considerable body of these men in Rome. They preached Christ of "envy and strife," and only these three were large-hearted enough to take their stand by his side. It was a brave thing to do. Only those who have lived in an atmosphere of misconception can understand what a cordial the clasp of a hand or the word of sympathy is. These men were like the old soldier who clapped Luther on the shoulder on his way to the Diet of Worms with "Little monk! little monk! you are about to make a nobler stand to-day than we in all our battles have ever done. If your cause is just, and you are sure of it, go forward in God's name, and fear nothing." But the best comfort Paul could have was help in his work. He did not go about the world whimpering for sympathy. He was much too strong a man for that. He wanted men to come down into the trench with him, and shovel and wheel there till they had made in the desert a highway for the King. This is what these men did, and so were a comfort to him. He uses a half medical term, which, perhaps, he had caught from the physician at his elbow, which we might perhaps parallel by saying they had been a cordial to him—like a refreshing draught to a weary man, or some whiff of pure air stealing into a close chamber and lifting the curls from some hot brow. The true cordial for a true worker is that others get into the traces and pull by his side. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Fellow-workers.—*Co-operation in work for Christ*:—Jesus sent out His disciples by twos, for He knew that each would cheer his fellow. Service is usually best in companionships: he who works altogether alone will be in his temper either too high or too low, censorious or desponding. Two are better far than one; they not only accomplish twice the work, as we might have expected, but they frequently multiply their power seven times by their co-operation. Happy are those wedded souls whose life of love to their Lord and one another is like the cluster on the staff, which they joyfully bear along! Happy those Christian companions who share each other's joys and sorrows, and so pass onward to the skies knit together as one man. Communication enriches, reticence impoverishes. Communion is strength, solitude is weakness. Alone, the fine old beech yields to the blast, and lies prone upon the sward; in the forest, supporting each other, the trees laugh at the hurricane. The sheep of Jesus flock together; the social element is the genius of Christianity. To find a brother is to find a pearl of great price; to retain a friend is to treasure up the purest gold. Between two upon a staff we find happiness. The monastic or hermit death-life is not our Master's *beau idéal*, but holy companionship is His chosen means for affording us help in service and advance in joy. (*Ibid.*)

The power of combination:—The house martin (*Chelidon urbica*), our common summer visitor to all parts of Europe, seems quite to understand that combination is strength. These birds possess some sort of intelligence with each other which enables them to combine their efforts to effect some desired purpose. Dupont de Nemours says—"I once saw a martin which had unfortunately, I know not how, caught its foot in the running knot of a thread, the other end of which was attached to a gutter of the Collège des Quatre Nations. Its strength being exhausted, it hung and cried at the end of the thread, which it raised sometimes by trying to fly away. All the martins of the great basin between the bridge of the Tuilleries and the Pont Neuf, and perhaps from a still greater distance, collected to the number of several thousands. They formed a cloud, all emitting cries of alarm and pity. After much hesitation and a tumultuous consultation, one of them invented a mode of delivering their companion, made the others understand it, and commenced its execution. All those that were within reach came in turn, as if running at the ring, and gave a peck to the thread in passing. These blows, all directed upon the same point, succeeded each other every second, or even still more frequently. Half an hour of this work was sufficient to cut through the thread, and set the captive at liberty." No union of men for a common purpose could more completely illustrate the truth that combination is strength. (*Scientific Illustrations.*)

Value of a faithful friend:—One of the company despatched a servant for a lute, and on its being brought it had lost tune, as happens to these instruments when exposed to the changes of the atmosphere. While he was tightening the strings, Gotthold's thoughts ran thus, "What is sweeter than a well-tuned lute, and what more delightful than a faithful friend who can cheer us in sorrow with affectionate discourse? Nothing, however, is sooner untuned than a lute, and nothing is more fickle than a friend. The tone of the one changes with the weather, that of the other with fortune. With a clear sky and a bright sun you will have friends in plenty; but let fortune frown and the firmament be overcast, then they will prove like the strings of the lute, of which you tighten

ten before you find one which will bear the tension or keep the pitch." *How Christians may comfort others*.—When this church was being built I became acquainted with one of the carpenters—a plain man—who worked upon it, and I had many chats with him afterwards. That day, being a Christian (sometimes I am not one), when I met him, as he came down the street, I stopped and spoke to him, and shook hands with him. And giving me, as I noticed, a peculiar look, and keeping hold of my hand, he said, "Now, sir, you do not know how much good this does me." "What?" said I. "Well, your speaking to me and shaking hands with me." Said he, "I shall go home to-night, and say to my wife, 'I met Mr. Beecher to-day.' 'Ah!' she will say, 'what did he say?' and the children will look up too. And I will tell them, 'He stopped me and shook hands with me, and asked if I was getting along well.' And they will talk about that for a week. You have no idea how much good it does a plain man to be noticed, and to be made to feel that he is not a nobody." (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Vers. 12-13. Epaphras, who is one of you.—*The sympathy of Christianity*.—1. If you think of Christianity as a great thought, a transcendental doctrine, a grand conception, you are right; and if you think the preacher is called upon to speak the language of earth in the accent of heaven and expound celestial mysteries, you are right. But this is not all. A man who would describe the present scene as all firmament would be wrong; but a man who omitted the firmament from a landscape would be a fool. It is the sky in a landscape painting that often first attracts attention. There could be no landscape were there no sky. So with this great Christian truth: it is firmamental, but it is the sky out of which our landscape comes—the immeasurable, out of which our units and definite lines are given to us. Christianity is not only the highest metaphysic, it is the most absolute practical teaching and sympathy. 2. What have these personal salutations to do in the Bible? When the apostle began this great letter, he seemed to strike a grand key, and to call the universe to hear. He speaks of One who is the "image of the invisible God," &c. That is grand music. Let that organ roll out its rhythmic thunders, and while they charm us make us solemn; but here at the end he begins to talk about Aristarchus, &c. Is he out of tune at last? Does the anthem die off into a mean piping, or is there still sweet music in it, encompassing, not shaking, the high heavens, but making the household glad, filling every room of it with sacred glee. 3. The more Christianity is understood the more will manhood go up in value. Christianity takes us all in charge—women, poor people, the sick. It goes to the merchant and says: "I have seen to-day many poor, sick ones, who want kindly treatment and practical sympathy, and you must give it. Any religion that talks so about men and to men is presumptively a true religion. Christianity has a message from every man to every other man. I. "Epaphras, who is one of you." 1. Being a native of Colossæ he carries it in his heart to Rome. The idea of the Church is domestic. We do not realize that. Our idea of it is approximation without identity, proximity without sympathy, a hebdomadal meeting and a week-long parting, a cold "how do?" without answer being waited for. The poor, simple soul thought you meant it, and was just about to tell you how he did when you jumped into your chariot and drove off. Christ's idea was that of a house, and Paul that of a family—"in whom the whole family," &c. See how these Christians love one another. They have a great respect for one another, a marvellous respect, an official respect; but the old apostolic unity and downright warm love—where is it? And echo answers where? 2. "One of you," though not at home. We think that going from home deprives a man of his proper belongings in the Church. A young man leaves us and goes to New Zealand. Is he no longer one of us? The poor lad's heart ached when the "good-bye" was forced out of him; but now that he is fifteen thousand miles away we say, "He once belonged to us." We want a warmer language and a more affectionate fellowship in God. How large a Church would be if we interpreted its membership in this way, that a man who is in a far-off city is still one of us, and still claims us, wonders what hymns we are singing, and what the text is. We are in danger of degrading the church into a meeting-house, a place of casual association, and of cutting off all those fine living bonds which ought to be independent of time and place, which make Rome Colossæ and Colossæ Rome, every land a home, and every Christian a brother. II. A SERVANT OF CHRIST. 1. Are you fond of titles? This is the one the King will give you. It is select, and yet might be universal. Let the noblest envy you. Other titles are sounds, sometimes sounds and fury,

signifying nothing. But this signifies to be the slave of Him "who though He was rich," &c. 2. What are the signs by which a servant of Christ is known? Those who are skilled in such things can go through a picture gallery and say, "This picture is after So-and-so." There is a manner that can be feebly imitated by the most skilful hands. So you cannot mistake a man who has been with Christ. In the early days there were those who took knowledge of disciples that they had been with Jesus. You have been in a garden of spices; I know it; you bring the fragrance with you. You have seen some solemn sight; I know it; vulgarity is ironed out of your face, and it is transfigured. You have heard strange music, and all the meaner elements have been taken out of you. You have been with Christ, and I know it by the tenderness and simplicity of your speech, by the diligence of your service, by the lavishness of your liberality. III. "SALUTETH YOU." That would not do now. I get letters from Christian friends that I would not send to a day labourer whom I had never seen in my life before. They are too correct to be true, too proper to be good. IV. "ALWAYS LABOURING FERVENTLY FOR YOU IN PRAYER." 1. I do not know that Epaphras was an eloquent preacher, but he was mighty in intercession. He threw his arms around his native Church, and toiled in prayer for them till his brow was bedewed as with agony, and his whole face lighted up with saintly expectation that he might see the descending blessing. That I can do for my friends. I may not be able to write elaborate letters, but I can pray for them. That you can do for me. 2. What did Epaphras pray for? "That ye may stand perfect—like a ship in full gale." Let that be my posture; no harsh, bitter wind striking me in the face, and making my sea-faring difficult, but a great favouring gale, bearing me onward, all sail set, towards the will of God. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The ministry of Epaphras*:—I. HIS OBJECT: that the Colossians might "stand perfect," &c. The will of God has reference—1. To our perfection in the knowledge of revealed truth. The Bible is a revelation of God's will with respect to us, and is able to make us wise unto salvation. Why has God put it before us but that we should study it. Our Lord reproved His disciples because of their want of due attention to His teaching, and the Hebrews are rebuked for their want of proficiency, and are exhorted to go on to perfection. This perfect knowledge is necessary—(1) To religious usefulness. (2) To progressive and entire sanctification. "Sanctify them through Thy truth." 2. To our salvation from sin. This must be complete before we can enter heaven; but provision is made in the blood "which cleanseth from all sin," and in the grace of the Spirit who "sanctifies wholly." 3. To the graces of the Spirit. (1) Faith. This admits of degrees. There is the weak faith of "babes"; the strong faith of "young men"; the ripe faith of "fathers," when it is perfect. (2) Love. This admits of degrees. I may have a sincere love for God, and yet not love Him "with all my heart"; a sincere love of man, and yet not as myself. But the love set forth in Scripture is "perfect love." (3) Hope. All Christians have this, but not all in an equal degree. It is not every believer who can say with John, "Even so; come, Lord Jesus." That is, however, the "full assurance of hope" for which we should all strive. (4) The passive graces, such as patience, which is to "have her perfect work that ye may be perfect," &c. 4. To our actual conduct in the world. Christ's religion is a practical religion (Titus ii. 11-12), and is to assume a perfect form (Heb. xiii. 20-21). To bring up His people to this standard God has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 5. To our stability and perseverance. Epaphras is anxious not only that the Colossians should be perfect in their conformity to the Divine will, but that they should "stand" in that state to the end of life. It is the end which crowns the work. It is not he who runs well for a season, but he who continues to the end, to whom the promise of life is given. II. THE MEANS OF SECURING THIS OBJECT—Prayer. From this we learn—1. That Christians can only be brought to this high standard by God's grace and blessing. Had they been able of themselves, prayer would have been presumptuous. We do not ask God to do for us what we can do for ourselves. But we never can be made Christians but by God—and God can make perfect Christians; and the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit must not be limited. 2. That prayer is available with God for obtaining needful grace. There are some who restrict the power of prayer to its subjective influence. If this were true, prayer for others would be of no avail. I might pray for one whom I love, and my prayer might exercise my benevolent feelings, but the person for whom I pray will receive no benefit. Away with so God-dishonouring a notion. Some of you, perhaps, have near relatives across the sea. Take encouragement. God's arm of power and mercy can reach them. Bring their cases before

Him. (1) Notice the earnestness and importunity of his prayer. True prayer is a labour. We ought in prayer to labour for a just apprehension of the Divine character, of the mediation of Christ, of the import of the promises. (2) Notice the connection of prayer with this object—the fulfilment of God's will. The glory of God is dear to every pious heart. Our Lord, therefore, taught us to pray, "Thy will be done," &c. 3. That the honour of true religion is connected with the perfection of Christian character. The world judges of Christians by their conduct. 4. That the welfare of Christians is connected with their perfection of character. Spiritual as well as bodily happiness depends on the state of the health. (*T. Jackson.*) **Labouring fervently for you in prayers.**—*Prayer the noblest form of work*.—1. Prayer is religion in action, and is the noblest kind of human exertion. It is the one department of action in which man realizes the highest privilege and capacities of his being. And in doing this he is enriched and ennobled almost indefinitely. 2. That this view of prayer is not universal is notorious. It is thought an excellent thing for clergymen, recluses, sentimentalists, and women and children generally; that it has its uses as a form of desultory occupation, an outlet for feeling, a means of discipline, but altogether less worthy of the energies of a thinking man than hard work in study or business. 3. In response to this let those speak who have really prayed. They sometimes describe prayer with Jacob, as a wrestling together with an unseen power, which may last even to the break of day (*Gen. xxxii. 24*), or with Paul, as a concerted struggle (*Rom. xv. 30*). They have their eyes fixed on the Great Intercessor in Gethsemane (*Luke xxii. 44*). Importunity is of the essence of successful prayer (*Luke xi. 8*; *xviii. 5*; *Matt. xv. 27-28*; *Mark vii. 28-29*); and importunity means not dreaminess, but sustained work, and of an energetic character (*Matt. xi. 12*). Bishop Hamilton, of Salisbury, once said that "no man was likely to do much good in prayer who did not begin by looking upon it in the light of a work, to be prepared for and persevered in with all the earnestness which we bring to bear on subjects which are the most interesting and necessary." This will appear if we take an act of prayer to pieces. To pray is—I. To **PUT THE UNDERSTANDING IN MOTION**, and to direct it upon the highest object to which it can address itself. How overwhelming are the truths which pass before us—a boundless Power, an eternal Existence. Then the substance of the petition, its motives, the issues which depend on its being granted or refused present themselves to the mind, as does the Intercessor who presents our prayers. II. To **PUT THE AFFECTIONS IN MOTION**. The object of prayer is the uncreated Love, and to be in His presence is to be conscious of heart expansion; and when the matter of prayer is blessing for others and not for self, all the best emotions and sentiments are called into play (*Matt. xv. 8*; *1 John iii. 21-22*). III. To **PUT THE WILL IN MOTION**, just as decidedly as we do when we sit down to read hard, or to walk up a steep hill against time (*John ix. 31*; *Matt. vii. 21*; *James iv. 7-8*; all of which imply that prayer in which the will is not engaged is worthless. That sovereign power does not merely impel us to make the first necessary mental effort, but enters most penetratingly and vitally into the very action of prayer itself (*Gen. xxxii. 26*). These three ingredients of prayer are ingredients in all real work, whether of the brains or the hands. The difference is that in prayer they are more equally balanced. Study may in time become intellectual habit, which scarcely demands any effort of will; handiwork may in time become so mechanical as to require little or no guidance from thought; each may exist without the co-operation of the affections. Not so prayer. It is always the joint act of the will and the understanding, impelled by the affections; and when either will or intelligence is wanting, prayer at once ceases to be itself, by degenerating into a barren, intellectual exercise, or into a mechanical and unspiritual routine. (*Canon Liddon.*) **Fervent labour in prayer**.—The word here used signifies to strive, or wrestle, as those do who strive for mastery; it notes the vehemency and fervency of this man's prayers for the Colossians. As the wrestlers do bend and writhe and stretch and strain every joint of their bodies, so did Epaphras every joint of his soul that he might be victorious with God upon the Colossians' account. So Jacob when alone with God (*Gen. xxxii. 24-27*; *Hos. xii. 4-5*) wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles; he holds his hold, and will not let God go, till as a Prince he has prevailed. (*T. Brooks.*) **The value of intercessory prayer**.—This was no passing wish, sentimental desire, transient emotion. The burden of Epaphras' heart was the good of the Church, and in proportion to the fervency of his affection was the importunity of his petition. There may be no help more needed, no succour more sure, than that obtained through prayer. Who can tell what good may

come to the wilful and wayward boy far away at sea, or in some distant land, from the unceasing intercessions of his mother, wrestling for him with God? You have a dear friend in sorrow at a distance. You cannot reach him to comfort him, but you can reach him by prayer more effectively than if you could see him face to face. Many a time has God's work revived, and rich spiritual blessing come to a congregation, through the earnest supplication of some obscure member. We do not ourselves know all that we owe to the prayers of others. There are circumstances in which we can do nothing but pray for those in whom we are deeply interested. Especially is it so with pastors. Some may seem ready to faint in the conflict; some fair blossoms of spiritual promise may be going up as dust; some often warned and entreated may be becoming more callous, or on the point of making shipwreck of faith, &c.; what can be done for such? The mightiest resource is persevering prayer. It is God alone whose help is all powerful, and this prayer can secure. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The power of prayer*:—A spoonful of water sets a hydraulic press in motion, and brings into operation a force of tons' weight; so a drop of prayer at one end may move an influence at the other which is omnipotent. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.—*Standing in perfection*.—1. There is no kind of qualification to this, no hint that Paul thought that Epaphras was asking with an extravagant expectation. They were no sham prayers; struggles after impossible attainments, but those that he and Paul thought might be realized. Such prayers are in conflict with modern notions, which regard perfection as beyond the range of practical Christianity. 2. What made Epaphras believe that he might ask this? (1) Paul's teaching. "We pray for this, even your perfection." "That we may present every man perfect." (2) Christ's words, "Be ye perfect," &c. 3. Was this an attainment to be expected in this life or the next? In this. Paul wrote that he had not attained, &c., but he appealed to the Philippians on the supposition that he and they were perfect. And so Christ teaches us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," i.e., perfectly. There is no difficulty here. It is our duty to be entirely conformed to the will of God, and yet see a point beyond our highest attainments, and say, "We must reach that also." Let us consider the purpose of these prayers. I. **NEGATIVELY**. 1. It is not that full knowledge and obedience may be achieved at once. This is impossible under the conditions imposed by the flesh, and both will be progressive under heavenly conditions. But we are to act according to our several ability. A child in the alphabet class must not be expected to do the work of the higher forms, either in the school of nature or of grace. It is enough that each does thoroughly what is allotted to it. An infant is perfect, but not in the same sense as a man. So it is in the kingdom of God. 2. It is not that temptation will be absent. Both Paul and Christ were fiercely tempted. 3. It is not that there will be an unbroken flow of joy and peace. No person is capable of being continuously under the same emotions, and alternations of joy and gloom make no difference to our spiritual standing, so long as we both we abide in God. There were changes of feeling in Paul and Christ. II. **POSITIVELY**. It is that we may do the will of God as far as we know it. We are not to ordain an impossible standard. Our King distributes to us a variety of talents. Hence the young act differently from the old; men from women; sickly from healthy, and yet in each the love of God may be perfected, viz., in the keeping of His commandments. And these commandments have a wonderful variety, and relate to secular as well as spiritual employments, since all life by the Christian is devoted to God. Do you say that this is an easy kind of perfection? Try it—Or that it is inconspicuous? True, so was Christ's generally. Only on occasions did His divinity flash forth. 2. It is that we may use the means for our fulfilling the will of God perfectly. Epaphras laboured in prayers, which denotes the power from which we are to derive our ability. We must go to God and He will supply all our need: in faith in His faithfulness who has promised, "who also will do it," even sanctify us wholly. (*D. G. Watt, M.A.*) *Christian perfection*:—A Christian may be said to be perfect in respect—I. Of the cause or fountain of holiness; so good gifts are said to be perfect (James i. 17), as they are from God. II. Of consecration (Heb. i. 10; v. 9). Christ was perfect because set apart to a perfect calling which He fulfilled perfectly. III. Of acceptance, not in respect of operation, the Lord accounting our confession of imperfection for perfection. IV. Of parts, though not in respect of degrees; he is perfect in that he hath holiness in every part, though not in such measure. Thus to be perfect is to be sanctified throughout. V. **COMPARATIVELY**, not positively. A Christian that makes conscience

of all his ways, and can love his enemies, is perfect (Matt. v. 48), in comparison of carnal men, that follow the swing of their own corruptions and affections. VI. Of TRUTH, though not in respect of absoluteness. Thus he is perfect, because he desires and endeavours after perfection, though in act he attains it not. VII. Of MEN or common estimation, and so he is perfect that is unrebukable. VIII. Of THE END, and so he may be said to be perfect—1. In intention, because he sets perfection as a mark to shoot at (Phil. iii.). 2. In respect of duration, because he holds out to the end. 3. In respect of accomplishment, because he finisheth what he undertaketh in godliness, or mortification, he doth it not by halves, or in some parts of it, for so to perfect is translated to finish (Acts xx. 24; John iv. 34, xvii. 4). (*N. Byfield.*) *All the will of God:*—There are people who would be content to do some part of what God wills, provided they might be excused the rest; as, for example, to believe the truth which God has revealed, but not to do the good works which He has commanded; or to exercise some of them, but utterly fail in others: as they who live fair with men, but remain in impiety, and in the profession of error; or those, on the contrary, who make profession of error; or those, again, who make open profession of the pure service of God, but spare not either the goods or honour of their neighbours; or who, abstaining from one vice, license themselves to others; who are chaste, but covetous; or liberal and beneficial to the poor, but corrupt and incontinent. This partition is unjust, injurious to God, impossible in truth, and incompatible with the nature of the things themselves. (*J. Daillé.*) *He hath a great zeal for you.*—*The nature of zeal:*—Zeal is an intense earnestness for the accomplishment of its object. It is defined in our latest dictionary as a passionate ardour in the pursuit and accomplishment of it. It is not, therefore, a great excitement of feeling, mere demonstrative warmth of expression, mere quickness of the motion, but something far more deep and enduring. It is a working, practical energy; a power which may be directed to things indifferent, good or bad. (*E. Garbett, M.A.*) *Fervent zeal:*—A little before his death Gregory Thaumaturgus made a strict inquiry whether there were any persons in the city and neighbourhood still strangers to Christianity. Being told there were about seventeen in all, he sighed, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, appealed to God how much it troubled him that any of his fellow-townsmen should still remain unacquainted with salvation. (*Milner.*) It is said of Holy Bradford, preaching, reading, and prayer, was his whole life. "I rejoice," said Bishop Jewel, "that my body is exhausted in the labours of my holy calling." . . . "Let racks, fires, pulleys, and all manner of torments come, so I may win Christ," said Ignatius. (*Watson.*) Reinerius, their adversary, declares "that a certain Waldensian heretic, with a view of turning a person from the Catholic faith (for such he calls the Romish errors), swam over a river in the night, and in the winter, to come to him, and to teach him the novel doctrines." (*Milner.*) *Laodicea* (see on chap. ii. 1). *Hierapolis.*—On the north side of the valley of Lycus, opposite to the sloping hills which mark the site of Laodicea, is a broad level terrace jutting out from the mountain side, and overhanging the plain with almost precipitous sides. On this plateau are scattered the vast ruins of Hierapolis. It is here that the remarkable physical features which distinguish the valley display themselves in the fullest perfection. Over the steep cliffs which support the plateau of the city tumble cascades of pure white stone, the deposit of calcareous matter from the streams which, after traversing this upper level, are precipitated over the ledge into the plain beneath, and assume the most fantastic shapes in their descent. At one time overhanging in cornices fringed with stalactites, at another hollowed out into basins or broken up with ridges, they mark the site of the city at a distance, glistening on the mountain side like foaming cataracts frozen in the fall. Like Laodicea, Hierapolis was at this time an important and a growing city, though not like Laodicea, holding Metropolitan rank. Besides the trade in dyed wools, which it shared in common with the neighbouring towns, it had a source of wealth peculiar to itself. The streams to which the scenery owes its remarkable features are endowed with valuable medicinal qualities, while at the same time they are so copious that the ancient city is described as full of self-made baths. An inscription still legible celebrates their virtues, "Hail, fairest soil in all broad Asia's realm; hail, golden city, nymph Divine, bedecked with flowing rills, thy jewels," and Esculapius and Hygeia appear on still extant coins. To the ancient magnificence of Hierapolis its ruins bear ample testimony. A city which combined the pursuit of health and gaiety had fitly chosen as its patron deity Apollo, the god alike of medicine and festivity, here worshipped as "Archegetes," the founder.

But more important, as illustrating its religious temper, is the fact, that there was a spot called the Plutonium, a hot well or spring, from whose hot mouth issued a fatal memphitic vapour, from the effects of which the mutilated priests of Cybele alone, so it was believed, were free. Indeed this city appears to have been a chief centre of the passionate mystical devotion of ancient Phrygia. But in addition to this religious rites were borrowed from other parts of the East, more especially from Egypt. By the multitude of her temples Hierapolis established her right to the title of the "sacred city" which she bore. Though, at this time, we have no record of her famous citizens, such as graced the annals of Laodicea, yet a generation or two later she numbered among her sons one nobler far than the rhetoricians, sophists, millionaires, and princes, of whom her neighbour could boast. The lame slave, Epictetus, the loftiest of heathen moralists, must have been growing up to manhood when the first rumours of the gospel reached his native city. Did any chance throw him across the path of Epaphras, or of St. Paul? We should be glad to think that the greatest of Christian and the greatest of heathen preachers met together face to face. Such a meeting would solve more than one riddle, and explain some strange coincidences in their writings. Drawn by trade, and by its charms as a gay watering-place, a very considerable colony of Jews settled down in Hierapolis, which gave point to a Talmudic complaint, "The wines and baths of Phrygia have separated the ten tribes from Israel." After the destruction of Jerusalem one of the chief settlements of the Christian dispersion was here, which explains how the Phrygian Churches assumed such a prominence in the ecclesiastical history of the second century. Here settled Philip of Bethsaida, the early friend and fellow-townsmen of St. John, who took up his abode in Ephesus, and the first apostle who held communication with the Gentiles (John xii. 20). Here he died and was buried; and here, after his decease, lived his two virgin daughters, from whom Papias heard several stories of the first preachers of the gospel, which he transmitted to posterity in his work. Papias was, probably, a native of Hierapolis, of which he afterwards became bishop. He was succeeded by Abercius, and Abercius by the great controversialist and apologist, Claudius Apollinaris, and presided at a council in this city at which Montanism was condemned. At a later date the influence of both Hierapolis and Laodicea declined. They take no great part in the great controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. Among their bishops there is not one who has left his mark on history. They take only a silent part in the great councils, and more than once wavered in their allegiance to the orthodox faith. (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

Ver. 14. Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.—*Luke the beloved physician:*—At the moment of the transition of Christianity from Asia to Europe Luke was enrolled among St. Paul's companions. We ascertain this by a change of a pronoun—"they" (Acts xvi. 6), "we" (Acts xvi. 10). The same language is continued in the narration of what took place at Philippi, and so Luke is very pointedly associated with this neighbourhood. But again we lose sight of the expression from the time Paul quits Macedonia, and we do not discern any trace of it till Paul is in Macedonia again (Acts xx. 5, 6). From this time he appears to have been in close companionship with the apostle, and to have gone with him to Rome (Acts xxviii. 16; Philemon 24; Col. iv. 14). A baseless tradition says that he was a painter; and yet in one sense it is most true. In the Acts, besides many minor portraits, we have a full-length picture of the great apostle, without which we could not have fully known St. Paul, and one drawn by the hand of a friend. We see how thoroughly the biographer sinks and forgets himself, revealing his ardent and steady friendship and modesty. But much more is made known to us concerning St. Luke through what is said of him by St. Paul. He speaks of him not merely as his "fellow labourer," but also as "the beloved physician." The mere fact that his profession is specified is full of interest. There are only two other such cases in the record which we have of the companions of our apostle. "Demetrius, the silversmith" (Acts xix. 24), though his conduct had much to do with a very important passage of St. Paul's career, can hardly be said to have been one of his companions: and of "Alexander the coppersmith," or "Zenas the lawyer" (2 Tim. iv. 14; Titus iii. 13), we know little. Lydia, "the seller of purple" (Acts xvi. 14), was probably brought to Philippi, and thus within the sacred circle of apostolic companionship, by the exigencies of her trade—while of Aquila and Priscilla, who were "tent-makers," we are distinctly told that Paul "abode with them, because he was of the same craft" (Acts xviii. 3). Similarly, there can

hardly be a doubt that St. Luke's professional life was the occasion of his coming into close contact with St. Paul. Physicians were men of high education, and this would establish an easy link of connection with one who, besides other great qualifications for his work, was a man of literary culture. But there is a strong probability that a deeper union between the two men subsisted than that of intellectual tastes. St. Paul had been suffering from serious illness in Galatia (Gal. iv. 13), and very soon afterwards St. Luke appears with him at Troas. During subsequent years they were frequently associated in the closest manner, and we have the best reasons for believing that the apostle's health was delicate. What so natural as to suppose that the first acquaintance at Troas was marked by the exercise of St. Luke's professional skill, and that the same skill was on many subsequent occasions available for the alleviation of suffering and fatigue? How entirely this explains the peculiar warmth and definiteness of the allusion here! We must carefully observe, too, that it is not merely St. Luke's medical knowledge which St. Paul mentions, but that he calls him "beloved" in connection with this characteristic. There seems to be evidently here the sense of personal gratitude for benefits received. It is natural to attempt to trace out some indications in St. Luke's writings of the fact that he was a physician. Thus it is in his Gospel alone, in the record of that first sermon at Nazareth, that we find the prominent mention of the "healing" of both mind and body as a characteristic of the Saviour's mission; and here only, at the close of that sermon, have we the quoting of that pointed proverb—"Physician, heal thyself" (Luke iv. 18, 23). With this may be classed a phrase which is unique in this Gospel, in the account of what took place soon afterwards—"The power of the Lord was present to heal them" (Luke v. 17). So again, we have, twice repeated, in this Gospel, a peculiar phrase having reference to recovery from sickness: "There went virtue out of Him and healed them all;" "Somebody hath touched Me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me" (Luke vi. 19; viii. 46). But, above all, we must notice what is almost an amusing corroboration of the view concerning the existence of this professional feeling in St. Luke's Gospel. In the account which the other evangelist gives of the woman healed a reflection seems to be thrown on the skill of the physicians (Mark v. 26); whereas St. Luke casts no imputation on the skill of those who belonged to his own profession (Luke viii. 43). Similarly we trace indications of the physician's mind in the mention of technical details and in the use of appropriate medical terms. In the account of the healing of Peter's wife's mother when St. Luke describes the fever as a "great" fever, and speaks of Jesus as "standing over" the patient, he is really using technical forms of expression; while still by the words, "He rebuked the fever," he is careful to mark the miraculous nature of the cure (Luke iv. 38, 39). In the Acts the writer has an evident tendency to dwell on symptoms; and this is a true mark of the medical mind. Thus, in relating the case of the lame man at the temple gate, it is not merely the fact of the recovery which is stated, but it is said that "the feet and ankle bones received strength;" and it is added further, as if to mark the stages of the recovery, that "he stood up and walked" (Acts iii. 7, 8). So the stages of the blindness of Elymas at Paphos are indicated, and the symptoms of the case, as well as the mere fact of the loss of sight, when it is said that, on the utterance of St. Paul's stern anathema, "there fell on him a mist and a darkness, and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand" (Acts xiii. 11). The last instance may be furnished by the record of St. Paul's stay in Malta, after the shipwreck. A miraculous cure was worked there on the father of Publius, "the chief man of the island," who was suffering from dysentery in an aggravated form; and the language which St. Luke applies to the patient is as exact and appropriate as if he himself had been called in to treat the case professionally (Acts xxviii. 8).

(Dean Houson.) *Luke the beloved physician*.—Note—I. THE CONGRUITY BETWEEN LUKE'S PROFESSION AND THE RELIGION OF WHICH HE HAD BECOME THE POSSESSOR.

1. The predominating characteristic of Christianity among the religions of the world is its humanity. It brings relief to the physical ills which curse the race. Christ acted as the Great Physician. "The works that I do shall ye do also." Where the gospel comes the laws of health and the healing art receive attention such as cannot be found among heathens. In the palmiest days of Greece these matters were terribly neglected.
2. The requirements and tendencies of Christianity involve attention to what is the physician's peculiar care. Physical well-being is essential to vigour of mind, healthy affections, pure morals, both in the individual and in the community. Diseased nervous conditions render the practice

of some Christian virtues well-nigh impossible. II. THE ADAPTATION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE LEARNED AND RICH, AS WELL AS TO THE POOR AND ILLITERATE. Religion in the ancient world was often a luxury for the well-to-do. The glory of the Saviour's ministry and its novelty was, "To the poor the gospel is preached." There is no room in it for despising culture. Dependence was placed, not upon the wild outburst of fanaticism or the erratic movements of ignorance, but upon the calm energy of disciplined intelligence. Paul was himself a scholar of rare attainments, as was Moses in the older economy, as also was Luke. Their mark on Christianity is the deepest, their influence the strongest. Crude, misshapen theologies are the product, not of the educated, but of smatterers. Luke was a physician when he believed the gospel. 1. The rich and scientific need its grace as much as the poorest and most illiterate. Its revelations make special demands upon the reason of the wise. 2. Luke's example shows us that cultivated intelligence does not find it impossible to assent either to the evidences or the doctrines of Christianity.

III. HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF PROFESSIONAL GODLINESS. Luke practised as a physician and preached as an evangelist. For long the healing art was in the hands of ecclesiastics. Modern division of labour has dissociated them. But the two can work together and work into each other's hands. But as the physician has to be with men under the darkest shadows of their lives and in the deepest depths, how essential that the spirit of their work should be the spirit of the Man of Sorrows. Luke was Paul's beloved friend. It is a calamity when the physician is unworthy of such a confidence on the part of an apostle. Luke's faithful consistency is full of practical admonition. Being dead he yet speaks. Faith in Christ Jesus, the Physician of souls, is the only but all-sufficient means of salvation. So Luke, the beloved physician, teaches. (*The Preacher's Monthly.*) *Religion and the medical profession.*—I. THE DEFERENCE SHOWN TO MEDICAL SCIENCE. Medicine has always occupied a conspicuous place among the sciences. It has to do with that which intimately concerns us. Our nature is not what it was as it came from the hand of God. Sin has turned this world into a vast lazaret-house. No individual ultimately escapes. Naturally men have sought amelioration, and their cry has always been met. Even the most savage tribes have "medicine men." So high was the estimate put on this act that it was regarded as akin to the supernatural and was chiefly in the hands of the priesthood. Among the Egyptians the knowledge of medicine was a profound secret, and in Greece it was carefully concealed and transmitted from father to son by the priests of Æsculapius, to whom belonged Hippocrates. Although medicine has ceased to be a secret it has lost nothing of its hold on the respect and confidence of mankind. As in religion men speak lightly of the profession, but as soon as a man, however sceptical, is sick he sends for the doctor. And no profession, except that which deals with the healing of the soul, has more claims on our gratitude. When the body is racked with pain or parched with fever the physician comes as a minister of mercy, and without the boon which he brings what is the value of all other earthly blessings. The banquet is spread in vain for the man who has no appetite, and riches, friends, &c., avail nothing.

II. THE BENEVOLENCE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION. Their labours are not the most remunerative. Compared with commerce the returns are meagre; yet what deserves ampler remuneration, not only on account of the benefits conferred, but because of the exhaustive character of the work. The merchant is always sure of his evenings and Sundays; the doctor never. And people make allowances when other men fail to keep their engagements, but no excuse is allowed the doctor. Serving all classes self-sacrificingly he is eminently the benefactor of the poor. III. THE RELIGIOUS DRAWBACKS OF THE PROFESSION. 1. It might seem that no class could be more favourably situated for having the claims of religion enforced upon them. With the *memento mori* ever before him how can the doctor forget that he, too, must die. Familiarity breeds contempt, however, here as elsewhere, or if not, it blunts the edge of providential appeals. 2. Then, again, there is the temptation to materialism into which so many medical men fall. Scientific research has to do with matter alone, and is incapable of discovering the soul; but that does not prove there is no soul, which scientists too often assume.

IV. THE RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROFESSION. Obligation is proportioned to opportunity in doing good. Who has such power over the confidence and the affections as the doctor? With what eagerness are his visits expected, and how much better does a patient often feel simply because the doctor has been. But how immeasurably would the happy effects of his visits be enhanced if he combined with his proper office that of physician for the soul. Words of encourage-

ment and consolation would be of more value because less professional than those of the minister, and what could be more imitative of the example of the Great Physician. He comes, too, just at the time for making a religious impression. In health men are callous, but sickness brings home subjects of momentous importance. (*J. Leyburn, D.D.*) *The importance of religion to the study and practice of medicine*:—(To medical students.) This science is a most pleasing and important study. Its object is the prevention and cure of disease. Next to the health of a man's soul is the health of his body. Without this enjoyment and usefulness is impaired and suffering brought on society in general. A great many men have and are engaged in it, and no class is more worthy of our respect. Witness their gratuitous attention to the poor and at hospitals, their remonstrances against the evils which infest the community. I. ILLUSTRATE THE SENTIMENT IN THE CHARACTER OF LUKE. He was a native of Antioch in Syria, where he probably studied at its famous university. Some say that he was a pupil of Galen, but the dates seem to disprove this. 1. His practice as a physician is not stated, whether large or small, but "the beloved physician" implies much to Paul and perhaps many others. He was beloved—(1) As a physician. How valuable to Paul to have a companion who understood medicine! How often did he require attention through stripes, bruises, ill-health, and exhausted energies. (2) As a friend. A man whose mind was cultivated by science and who could write those elegant dedications to Theophilus, and the books of which they are the prefaces, must have been very congenial to a mind like Paul's. (3) As a helper. The healing art has been always a powerful help to the gospel. The physician can get a word in where the clergyman cannot. 2. Note the importance of religion to him as a physician. (1) It gave him a decided character. He chose to leave his residence and practice to travel, not for pleasure or in the interests of science, but with a persecuted missionary to propagate the gospel. We are not all called to follow this example, but it shows how piety enables a man to prize real excellence, choose and do the greatest good, and not to be ashamed of God when it is fashionable to deny Him. (2) It made him useful. He, like his Master, was cast among the diseased. Miracles were not always necessary, hence Christ was sparing of them. He that cures the body does well; he that cures the soul does better; he that cures both does best. The name of Luke the "beloved physician" is admired, but Luke the evangelist all nations shall bless. II. PROVE THE SENTIMENT IN RESPECT TO YOURSELVES. Religion is important. 1. To prepare you for study. You of all men require a peaceful, not a torturing, conscience; a mind at rest, not driven to and fro with the speculations of every religious adventurer. The religion of Christ gives this. 2. To accompany scientific investigations. You have to study the noblest work of God. That religion accelerates this study is proved by David (Psa. cxxxix.) and Solomon (Eccles. xii.). Here is a knowledge of anatomy in its most beautiful form. How can you investigate this without right views of God? Wisdom, power, and goodness display themselves in every exhibition of the human body. And that science should lead to materialism is astounding. 3. To aid usefulness in practice. Patients are often dependent for their recovery on the state of their mind. Disease is aggravated by anxiety, murmuring, and irreligious views of God. If without the formality of a clerical visit you can soothe the mind and drop into it a Divine promise, how vastly your usefulness will be augmented. And besides, there will be cases which no medicine can reach. What will you do then if you are not qualified by religion to be a physician for the mind? 4. To exalt the character. The man who reverences God and promotes the highest interests of others may be sneered at by infidels and profligates, and perhaps looked down upon by other members of his profession; but ask the public what they think of such a man. But, better still, such a man will stand well in the estimation of God. 5. To promote your own happiness. (*J. Sherman.*) Demas (Philemon 24), perhaps Demetrius. Is the curt mention of this man contrasted with the full affectionate recognition of St. Luke the cloud no bigger than a man's hand which prepares as for the subsequent darkness that hangs over him? (2 Tim. iv. 10). (*Bishop Alexander.*) We know no more about him except the melancholy record, "Demas hath forsaken me," &c. Perhaps he was a Thessalonian, and went home. His love of the world was his reason for abandoning Paul. Probably it was on the side of danger that the world tempted him. He was a coward, and preferred a whole skin to a clear conscience. In immediate connection with the record of his desertion we read, "At my first answer, no man stood by me, but all men forsook me." As the same word is used, probably Demas was one of those

timid friends whose courage was not equal to standing by Paul when he thrust his head into the lion's mouth. Let us not be too hard on a constancy that warped in so fierce a heat. He may not have been an apostate Christian, though he was a faithless friend. Perhaps, away in Thessalonica, he repented him of his evil, and perhaps Paul and Demas met again before the throne, and there clasped inseparable hands. Let us not judge a man of whom we know so little, but take to ourselves the lesson of humility and self-distrust. That world that was too strong for Demas will be too strong for us if we front it in our own strength. It is ubiquitous, working on us everywhere, and always like the pressure of the atmosphere upon our bodies. Its might will crush us, unless we can climb to, and dwell on, the heights of communion with God, where pressure is diminished. It acted on Demas through his fears. It acts on us through our ambitions, affections, and desires. So, seeing that miserable wreck of Christian constancy, and considering ourselves lest we also be tempted, let us not judge another, but look at home. There is more than enough there to make profound self-distrust our truest wisdom, and to teach us to pray, "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe," (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Luke and Demas:—These two names in juxtaposition and subsequent separation suggest—I. THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP. 1. Society is divided into many classes. Men are bound together by similarity of pursuit, taste, attainment. The basis of their union may be pecuniary equality, political agreement, or common occupation. But such friendships are temporary, being based on what is temporary. A man's circumstances may alter, his tastes change; easy then for friends to be sundered. The poor basis of worldly friendship may resist the sapping waters of change. But this is the exception; hence we say, "What devotion!" Self-interest may bind men together, and even a common consciousness of wrong. But let self be imperilled, and where is the cohesion then? 2. The basis of Christian friendship is common love to a common Lord. "A new commandment give I unto you that ye love one another, as I have loved you." There is the measure and the motive. The coolness of some professors shows how they lack the spirit of Christ. As we are in Him, and imbued with His spirit, shall we be one in Him. In the primitive Church men of different ranks and pursuits, &c., "continued in the apostles' . . . fellowship." And then Paul, a man of large intelligence, wide learning, good family, &c.—just the man to hold others aloof—after the heavenly vision, gathered into his friendship Luke the physician, Onesimus the runaway slave, and Demas. Beautiful his friendship with men of less degree. And when he writes to distant brethren he says, "Luke, I shall mention your name, and, Demas, yours." II. COMMON CHRISTIAN LABOUR IS A CEMENTING FORCE IN CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP. In writing to Philemon, Paul shows the thing which bound them together. Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers. Paul had an utter impatience of idleness. He had not only the faculty of industry, but of setting others to work. And whoever co-operated with him, however humble, received the title of "fellow-worker." 1. Luke was such; and was very valuable to the oft-afflicted apostle as—(1) A physician. Invaluable everywhere, especially so in prison, the sedentary life of which told upon the apostle's never stalwart frame. But Luke was with him with his physic and his words, "doing good like medicine." (2) As a congenial fellow-traveller and helper in missionary work. (3) The hand that could wield a lancet could also use a skilful pen, and by his Gospel and Acts he has laid the Church under perpetual obligations. 2. What of Demas? What he could do is not written. But he did something. He was no idler. Paul calls him a fellow-worker. He was no Luke, but as there are diversities of gifts, so he had his special line, as has every one. 3. Common labour will draw us together. From the general down to the drummer-boy, all in an army, when the battle is expected, feel knit together, for they have a common enemy; and when the enemy is vanquished, they rejoice in a common victory. Let all Christians unite against evil and for God, and that will unite all hearts. III. WORLDLINESS IS THE DISINTEGRATING FORCE IN CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP. Pleasant is our first brief view of Demas—sharer of work and affection with Luke. Later on Paul writes, "Demas forsook me . . . only Luke is with me." Paul can ill spare a friend now, for "the time of his departure is at hand." On his release from prison Paul had two or three years of Christian labour. Did Demas go with him? Again Paul is cast into a Roman cell. Still Demas is his friend; but only for a while. How much of sincerity mingled with this man's profession of Christ? Did he leave under temptation? Was he recovered? It is worthy of note that in the three times he is mentioned there is no honourable

epithet attached to his name. Was Paul in doubt of him? Did his quick eye detect in him an ambitious spirit, or a love of ease, or a hunger for human approbation? He went to Thessalonica. Did his pagan parents seduce him back to idolatry? Or had some heathen beauty captivated and drawn his love from that which ought to have been supreme? Was he ever recovered? Let us hope so; although tradition says he became a heathen priest, and was struck dead with lightning while officiating at the altar. Whatever his end, worldliness was his immediate ruin. Many are the modern confirmatory instances. Many once Christian workers are now idlers. Shall the queen's soldier turn deserter because of his difficulties or comrades? Loyalty to queen and country forbid. Shall the Christian's duty be less binding? God help us to stay with Luke, and not desert with Demas. What did he gain? What is that gain to him now? (*G. T. Coster.*) How strikingly these two contrasted characters bring out—I. THE POSSIBILITY OF MEN BEING EXPOSED TO THE SAME INFLUENCES, AND YET ENDING FAR AWAY FROM EACH OTHER! They set out from the same point, and travelled side by side, subject to the same training, in contact with the magnetic attraction of Paul's personality, and at the end they are wide as the poles asunder. Starting from the same level, one line inclines ever so little upwards, the other imperceptibly downwards. Pursue them far enough, and there is room for the whole solar system in the space between them. So two children trained at one mother's knee, subjects of the same prayers, with the same good influence upon both, may grow up, one to break a mother's heart and to disgrace a father's name, and the other to walk in the way of godliness and to serve the God of his fathers. Circumstances are mighty; but the use we make of circumstances lies with ourselves. As we trim our sails and set our rudder, the same breeze will take us in opposite directions. We are the architects and builders of our own characters, and may so use the most unfavourable influences as to wholesomely harden our natures thereby, and we may so misuse the most favourable as only thereby to increase our blameworthiness for wasted opportunities. II. We are reminded, too, from these two men who stand before us like a double star—one bright, one dark—that NO LOFTINESS OF CHRISTIAN POSITION NOR LENGTH OF CHRISTIAN PROFESSION IS A GUARANTEE AGAINST FALLING AND APOSTASY. As we read in another book, for which also the Church has to thank a prison cell—the place where so many of its precious possessions have been written—there is a backway to the pit from the gate of the Celestial City. Demas had stood high in the Church, and had been admitted to the close intimacy of the apostle, was evidently no raw novice, and yet the world could drag him back from so eminent a place in which he had long stood. "Let him that thinketh he standeth," &c. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 15. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas.—*Early Church life*.—I. THE BRETHREN AT LAODICEA. This salutation teaches us—I. That brotherly love should flourish among all Christians. The philosophers of old said that "a wise man was a friend to a wise man, although unknown"; but we may say that a Christian is a brother, although unknown; yea, he is more united than any natural brother (*Acts iv. 32*). 2. This brotherly love is not only declared by words, but by services, as often as brethren, even they who live in remote churches, need our assistance. For to salute one by word as a brother, and not to promote the welfare of a brother, is the work of derision rather than of love. II. THE CHURCH WHICH WAS IN THE HOUSE OF NYMPHAS. Either the assembly of Christians meeting there or his private family, which, for its piety, merited the name of Church. There is no harm in understanding it in both senses. 1. Every collection of believers, although, on account of its smallness, may be included in the walls of a private house, and although, on account of their enemies, they meet in nocturnal assemblies, is a true Church, a member of the Church Universal. 2. The Papists therefore err who acknowledge no Church unless that which has the sovereignty, and is ever before the eyes of the world, for sometimes through persecution the Church cannot move in the public sight at all (*Rev. xii. 6*). So when the Arians ruled, Athanasius and the orthodox were compelled to retire into corners. 3. It is the duty of every head of a family so to train his children and servants that his house may deservedly obtain the name of a church (*Gen. xviii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 15*), and those who neglect this are unworthy of the name of Christians. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *The Church in the house*.—In that the apostle calls this household a Church, we may note that a religious and well-ordered family is as it were a little Church. Now, do we learn from hence that our houses are

Churches? Then these things will follow. 1. That God's worship and piety must be set up in them. How can they be Churches of God if God be not served in them? 2. All must be done there in order, and quietness, and silence, for so it is or should be in the Church. 3. Evil persons that are incorrigible must not dwell there, but must be cast out (Psa. ci.). 4. The husband or master of the family must dwell there as a man of knowledge, and wives, children, and servants must obey as the Church doth Christ. Conclusion: 1. Are our families Churches? Why, then, religious families are in a happy case, for then God Himself will dwell there; so as a stranger coming to such places may say, as Jacob did of Bethel, "Surely God is in this place." 2. Should our families be Churches? Oh, then, woe unto the world of profane households. (*N. Byfield.*) *The Church in the house of Nymphas*:—We read that Priscilla and Aquila had such both in their house at Rome (Rom. xvi. 5) and in Ephesus (1 Cor. xvi. 19), and that Philemon had one in his house at Colossæ. This may have been the families, or small congregations meeting in these houses. The expression gives us a glimpse of the primitive elasticity of Church order and fluidity of ecclesiastical language. The word Church had not yet been fixed to its present technical sense. There was but one Church in Laodicea, and yet within it was this little Church—an *imperium in imperio*—as if the word had not yet come to mean more than an assembly, and as if all the arrangements of order and worship of later days were undreamed of yet. The life was there, but the forms which were to grow out of the life, and to protect it sometimes, and to stifle it often, were only beginning to show themselves, and were certainly not yet felt to be forms. If the Church in the house of Nymphas consisted of—

I. HIS OWN FAMILY AND DEPENDENTS, it stands for us as a lesson of what every family which has a Christian man or woman at its head ought to be. Little knowledge of so-called Christian households is needed to be sure that domestic religion is woefully neglected to-day. Family worship and instruction are disused, one fears, in many homes, the heads of which can remember both in their fathers' houses; and the unspoken atmosphere of religion does not fill the house with its aroma as it ought to do. If a Christian householder have not "a Church in his house," the family union is tending to become "a synagogue of Satan." A like suggestion may be made if this Church—

II. INCLUDED MORE THAN FAMILY AND DEPENDENTS. It is a miserable thing when social intercourse plays freely round every other subject, and taboos all mention of religion; when Christian people choose society for worldly advantages, and for every reason under heaven—sometimes a long way under—except those of a common faith, and of the desire to increase it. It is not needful to lay down extravagant, impracticable restrictions, by insisting that we should limit our society to religious men, or our conversation to religious subjects. But it is a bad sign when our associates are chosen for every other reason but their religion, and when our talk flows copiously on all other subjects, and becomes a constrained dribble when religion comes to be spoken of. Let us strive to carry about with us an influence which shall permeate all social intercourse, and make it, if not directly religious, yet never antagonistic to religion, and always capable of passing easily and naturally into the highest regions. Our godly forefathers used to carve texts over their doors. Let us do the same in another fashion, so that all who cross our threshold may feel that they have come into a Christian household, where cheerful godliness sweetens and brightens the sanctities of home. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Church duties at home*:—Two Christians met on a Monday morning. Both were parents. As was natural, the conversation turned upon the services of the previous day. The first speaker opened by saying, "We had a sermon from our minister last night on the religious instruction of children. Why didn't you come and hear it?" "Because," said the other, "I was at home doing it!" (*Christian Treasury.*) *Home example*:—It was a source of much trouble to some fishes to see a number of lobsters swimming backwards instead of forwards. They therefore called a meeting; and it was determined to open a class for their instruction, which was done, and a number of young lobsters came, for the fishes gravely argued that if they commenced with the young ones, as they grew up they would learn to swim aright. At first they did very well; but afterwards, when they returned home, and saw their fathers and mothers swimming in the old way, they soon forgot their lessons. So many a child well taught at school is drifted backwards by a bad home influence. (*Bible Class Magazine.*) *The Church anywhere*:—The Church of Jesus Christ is found wherever He is known, served, and adored according to His gospel; within the enclosure of the walls of a house, or in the very caverns of mountains.

and coverts of the wilderness, whither the Holy Spirit expressly foretells us that the spouse of the Lamb shall be sometimes constrained to retire. (*J. Vaillé.*) *A prayerless home*.—I shall never forget the impression made upon me during the first year of my ministry by a mechanic whom I had visited, and on whom I urged the paramount duty of family prayer. One day he entered my study, and bursting into tears, said, "You remember that girl, sir; she was my only child. She died suddenly this morning. She has gone, I hope, to God. But if so, she can tell Him what now breaks my heart—that she never heard a prayer in her father's house or from her father's lips! Oh that she were with me but one day again!" (*Norman Macleod.*)

Ver. 16. When this Epistle is read among you, cause it to be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans.—I. THE APOSTLE WISHED HIS EPISTLE TO BE READ IN THE WHOLE CHURCH. Hence observe—1. That the sacred Scriptures were not written for the clergy, but for all Christian people, and that the ordinary reading of the Scriptures obtained in the primitive Church (1 Thess. v. 27). And that this was in a language understood by the people is plain from Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and other fathers. 2. That they do err who deny that the reading of the Scriptures conduces to the edification of a Christian people unless there be an exposition by the preacher. This is not to detract from the utility or necessity of preaching. Nevertheless, we assert with the Psalmist (Psa. xix. 7). II. HE ORDERED THEM TO COMMUNICATE THIS EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS. 1. Because the doctrine of the Epistle is general, and on that account was not to be reserved for the private use of the Church, but to be communicated to the whole Church of God, but first to their nearest neighbours, who, having read the autograph, could take copies of them and scatter them abroad. 2. Because Laodicea was infected with the same error as Colossæ. Observe, then, that among all the Churches of God, and especially neighbouring ones, there ought to be a communication of spiritual benefits, so that if one Church should have anything that might contribute to the edification of another, it should not grudge to impart it. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *The Epistles a common means of edification*.—The first Churches were edified by the mutual interchange of apostolical Epistles, and by the public reading of them. An Epistle sent to one Church became in reality the common property of all the Churches, and this fact led, at no very long period, to the formation of the canon of the New Testament. These Epistles were eagerly sought after, frequently copied, and devoutly cherished, so that complete collections of them were made. They were carefully distinguished from other writings, and, by the voice of the Churches, to them exclusively was accorded a place in the sacred canon. In this arrangement the wisdom of God was providentially manifested. By such use of the Holy Scripture the first Christians were nourished in their faith, and built up in the love and hope of the gospel. Healthful religion from that time to this, and, indeed, previously, under the Jewish economy, has been connected with a free, frequent, and devout use of Holy Scripture. This alone, by the blessing of God, can preserve the purity and living power of a Church. Shut out the Word of God, and superstition and spiritual death will creep in. It is by the use of the unadulterated "milk of the Word" that the disciples are to grow (1 Pet. ii. 2). It is the "engrafted Word" which saves (James i. 21). It is through the comfort of the Scriptures that we have hope (Rom. xv. 4). And all Scripture is profitable (2 Tim. iii. 16–17). (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *General reading of Scripture allowed*.—Nothing is more condemnatory of the practice of Rome than this plain unequivocal command. Yet Romanists prohibit the general perusal of the Scriptures, and read only small portions, and these in an unknown tongue, in public worship. St. Paul orders his entire Epistle to be read publicly. But if one Epistle, then all Epistles are equally required to be read. The Old Testament was, as we know, constantly recited in the Jewish synagogues, as is manifest by the case of our Lord at Nazareth and St. Paul at Antioch (Acts xiii. 15); and in the face of the apostle's command respecting his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, Romanism sets up its prohibitions. Can we wonder that all evils and superstitions should follow; that the invocation of saints, the worship of images, the adoration of the Virgin, and the veneration of altars, tombs, and relics should supersede the mediation of Christ; and that a multitude of uncommanded ceremonies and abstinences, and a whole torrent of will-worship, should follow in the train? (*Bishop D. Wilson.*) *The Epistle from Laodicea*.—The connection forbids us to suppose that this means a letter by the Laodiceans. Both letters are plainly

Pauline Epistles, and the latter is said to be "from Laodicea," simply because the Colossians were to procure it from that place. The "from" does not imply authorship, but transmission. What, then, has become of that letter? Is it lost? So say some; but a more probable opinion is that it is the Epistle we know as that to the Ephesians. Very weighty authorities omit the words "In Ephesus" in verse 1 of that Epistle. The conjecture is a reasonable one that the letter was intended for a circle of Churches, and had originally no place named in the superscription, just as we might issue circulars "To the Church in _____," leaving a blank to be filled in with different names. This conjecture is strengthened by the marked absence of personal references in the letter, which, in that respect, forms a striking contrast to Colossians, which it so strongly resembles in other particulars. Probably, therefore, Tychicus had both letters put into his hands for delivery. The circular would go first to Ephesus, as the most important Church in Asia, and thence would be carried by him to one community after another, till he reached Laodicea, from which he would come further up the valley to Colossæ, bringing both letters with him. The Colossians are not told to get the letter from Laodicea, but to be sure they read it. Tychicus would see that it came to them; their business was to see that they marked, learned, and inwardly digested it. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 17. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry.—Often men who were once faithful grow negligent in the ministry. 1. Sometimes from discouragements from their people, either because they profit not, or because they weary their teachers. 2. Sometimes this comes from the corruption of their own natures; they grow soon weary of God's work, or, having taken more work to do than they are sufficient for, they grow to neglect all; or they are drawn away with the love of the world. 3. Sometimes God Himself for the wickedness of their lives casts a barrenness upon their hearts, and blasteth their gifts. In this exhortation four things may be noted. I. WHO IS HE THAT IS EXHORTED? "Say to Archippus." This teaches us that—1. The sinner must be told of his sin (*Lev. xix. 17*). 2. Such as offend publicly must be told of it publicly. 3. Ministers as well as others may be rebuked, though some clergymen are so sore and so proud, that they may not be touched; and many times it is a just judgment of God that no man should rebuke them. No man's learning or greatness of place can so protect them, but that they may be told of their faults; it is too commonly known they can sin as well as others; why, then, should they not be rebuked as well as others? 4. The people may put their teachers in mind of their faults; as they ought to encourage them in well-doing, so may they admonish them for what is evil. 5. Ministers must be told of their faults by their people with great reverence, and heedfulness, and wisdom, according to that direction: "Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father." 6. They must say it to him, not say it of him. Ministers ought not to be traduced behind their backs. 7. He doth not threaten him if he do not, which implies he hoped their exhortation would speed; certainly it is a great praise to profit by admonition. II. THE MATTER CHARGED UPON HIM. "Take heed to thy ministry." Note—1. Consideration, a weighing and meditation of the greatness of the function, of the dignity of it, and the duty also, with the accounts he must make to God and His high calling and the great price of souls, &c. 2. Divers of the worthy qualities of a minister, as care, attendance, watchfulness, aptness to teach, and divide the word aright; discretion, to give every one his portion; diligence, gentleness, in not marring the doctrine with passion; patience to endure the work and labour of his ministry, &c. 3. Caution, and so ministers must take heed both of (1) what is within them of their own divinations, of idleness, of the objections of their own flesh, and the temptations of the devil. (2) Without them they must take heed of the new errors that will daily rise; of the sins of the people, with all the methods of Satan in devising, committing, or defending of sin, of men's fancies; and for persons, they must take heed of hypocrites, and open adversaries, domestical vipers, and foreign foes, false brethren, and professed idolaters. III. THE REASON BY WHICH IT IS URGED. "Which thou hast received in the Lord." 1. Because it is God's free grace that he is chosen to be a minister (*Rom. v. 1*). 2. Because he is inwardly called and qualified by God. 3. Because he received his outward authority, though from men, yet by direction and warrant of God's Word. 4. Because he receives it for the Lord—that is to God's glory, and the furtherance of His kingdom, over the mystical body of Christ. The use is threefold. First, the people should therefore learn to seek their ministers of God. Secondly, ministers should hence learn not

to be proud, for they received their ministry of God; it was His gift, not their deserts; not idle, for they are to do God's work. Thirdly, ministers may hence gather their own safety notwithstanding the oppositions of the world, that God that called them will perfect them. IV. To FULFIL IT. 1. By constancy, holding out in it to the end, to go on, and not look back when they are at plough. 2. By faithful performance of it with a due respect of all the charge they have received of God, thus to fulfil it is to show the people all the counsel of God; it is to rebuke all sorts of sins and sinners; it is faithfully to do every kind of work that belongs to their ministry whether public or private. (*N. Byfield.*) *The ministry of Archippus*:—It is probable that Archippus was a young pastor recently appointed to the Church at Laodicea. Already signs of slackened zeal began to appear, which afterwards culminated in the state of lukewarmness for which this Church was denounced (Rev. iii. 19). The condition of preacher and people react upon each other; the Church takes its colour from, and communicates it to its pastor. Hence the apostle, well knowing the perils surrounding the inexperienced Archippus, sends to him this timely warning to take heed to his ministry. He is reminded of—**I. THE DIRECT AUTHORITY OF THE MINISTRY.** "In the Lord."

II. THE IMPLIED DANGERS OF THE MINISTRY. "Take heed." **III. THE IMPERATIVE PERSONAL DEMANDS OF THE MINISTRY.** "That thou fulfil it." (*G. Barlow.*) *Archippus and his ministry*:—A sharp message that, and especially sharp as being sent through others. If this Archippus were a member of the Church at Colossæ, it is remarkable that Paul should not have spoken to him directly, as he did to Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. iv. 2). But it is by no means certain that he was. He is named in the Epistle to Philemon in such immediate connection with the latter and his wife Apphia, that he has been supposed to be their son. At all events, he was intimately associated with the Church in the house of Philemon, who, as we know, was a Colossian. But, on the other hand, the difficulty referred to, and the fact that the whole section is concerned with Laodicea, points to the conclusion that Archippus, though perhaps a native and even resident at Colossæ had his ministry in connection with a neighbouring Church. But what does it matter where he worked? Not very much perhaps; and yet one cannot but read this grave exhortation to a man who was evidently getting languid and negligent, without remembering what we hear about Laodicea and its angel when next we meet it. It is not impossible that Archippus may have received the message more

powerful than Paul's. "Because thou art neither hot nor cold," &c. Be that as it may—**I. EACH OF US HAS A MINISTRY**, or sphere of service. We may fill it full, with earnest devotion and patient heroism, as some expanding gas fills out the silken round of its containing vessel, or we may breathe into it only enough to occupy a little portion, while all the rest hangs empty and flaccid. **II. A SACRED MOTIVE ENHANCES THE OBLIGATION.** We have received it "in the Lord." In union with Him it has been laid upon us. No earthly hand has imposed it, nor does it arise from mere earthly relationships. **III. THERE MUST BE DILIGENT WATCHFULNESS TO FULFIL OUR MINISTRY.** 1. We have to take heed to our service, reflect upon it, its extent, nature, imperativeness, the manner of discharging it, and the means of fitting us for it. We have to keep it before us. Unless we are absorbed in it, we shall not fulfil it. 2. We have to take heed to ourselves, ever feeling our weakness and the strong antagonisms in our own natures which hinder our discharge of the plainest and most imperative duties. 3. Let us remember, too, that if we begin, like Archippus, to be a little languid and perfunctory in our work, we may end where the Church at Laodicea ended. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The Christian ministry*:—**I. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS A SOLEMN AND RESPONSIBLE TRUST.** 1. It is Divine in its bestowal. "Received in the Lord." 2. It is personal in its responsibility. "Which thou hast received." 3. It involves the communication of good to others. "Ministry." 4. It has a special aspect of importance for the individual minister. "The Ministry."

II. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEMANDS UNSWERVING FIDELITY IN ACCOMPLISHING ITS LOFTY MISSION. "That thou fulfil it." 1. Divine truth must be clearly apprehended and profoundly realized. 2. The whole truth must be declared. 3. The declaration of truth must be full and courageous. **III. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS SURROUNDED BY PECULIAR PERILS.** "Take heed." A shrewd and ever wakeful vigilance is needed against—**I. The stealthy encroachments of error.** 2. The pernicious influences of the world. 3. The subtle temptations to unfaithfulness. (*G. Barlow.*) *Ministers must look to Christ their Master for direction*:—At the battle of Lake Erie, when, in the sweeping havoc which was sometimes made, a number of men were shot away from

around a gun, the survivors looked silently around to Perry, and then stepped into their places. When he looked at the poor fellows who lay wounded and weltering on the deck, he always found their faces turned towards him, and their eyes fixed on his countenance. In the midst of trials and labours the minister should keep his eyes on the great Leader, Christ.

Ver. 18. The salutation of me, Paul.—*Words of farewell*.—Last words have in them a nameless touch of pathos. They linger in the memory as a loved, familiar presence, soothe life's sorrows, and exert upon the soul a strange fascination. As the years rush by, how rich in meaning do the words of dying lips become, as when Cæsar said, sadly: "And thou, Brutus!" or when John Quincy Adams said: "This is the last of earth;" or Mirabeau's frantic cry for "Music," after a life of discord; or George Washington's calm statement: "It is well;" or Wesley's triumphant utterance: "The best of all is, God is with us!" And these closing words of the high-souled apostle, written from his prison, in the prospect of threatened death, carry with them a significance and tenderness which will be felt wherever this Epistle is read. I. A PERSONALLY INSCRIBED SALUTATION. The rest of the Epistle was dictated by the apostle to an amanuensis. He adds his own salutation not only as an expression of his love, but also as a mark of the authenticity of the document. It were worthy of the pencil of genius to portray the noble prisoner, whose right hand was linked to the left of his military jailor, tracing with tremulous fingers the final words to those for whose sake he was in bonds! How would the hand-writing of such a man be prized and venerated, and with what holy eagerness would his words be read and pondered! II. A TOUCHING REMINDER. "Remember my bonds." The apostle was in prison, not for any offence against the laws of God or man, but for the sake of the gospel. The Church of Christ in all ages has had abundant reason to remember with gratitude and praise the bonds of the great apostle, not only for the stimulating example of holy patience and dignified submission displayed under trying circumstances, but for his unspeakably precious literary work. The Epistle begins and ends with blessing; and between these two extremes lies a body of truth which has dispensed blessings to thousands, and is destined to bless thousands more. The benediction is short, but instinct with life, and laden with Divine beneficence. Grace is inclusive of all the good God can bestow, or man receive. Lessons: 1. Praise God for a well-authenticated Bible. 2. Praise God for the teachings of a suffering life. 3. Praise God for His boundless grace. (G. Barlow.) Remember my bonds.—*Chains*.—Being bound by a chain, Paul had to employ a secretary, and then at the close of the letter he would raise his own manacled hand, and add a few words of loving salutation. Under these circumstances his writing would be awkward and ill-formed. He looks at the MS. He sees his friend's work so neat, and his own writing disfiguring the MS. "What will the Colossians think of this? They may regard it as an indication of carelessness. I will tell them the reason—my bonds. They will not misunderstand now." This is a small circumstance, but there is this in it: If the great apostle needed consideration, and had something which spoiled the perfection of his work, and which, being remembered, accounted for the imperfection, may it not be true of others also? We have all a chain of some kind. I. HOW MANY CHAINS THERE ARE THAT NEED TO BE REMEMBERED. 1. Temperament often hinders men from being and doing what others expect of them. Some are impulsive, others slow; some are irritable, others placid; some must work spasmodically, others are dogged; some are sanguine, others despondent. You see all this in the family circle, where you make allowance. You see it in the Church; remember it there. 2. The bondage of education, i.e., the training of a lifetime, leads to misunderstandings. One man has had a rough, and another a gentle, bringing up. They meet as brethren—the one hearty, the other reserved. The one thinks the other rude; the other thinks his brother cold. Yet both are equally friendly and loyal. What they want is to remember one another's bonds. 3. Family ties are sometimes bonds. How many live in unsympathetic homes which restrain their better impulses, and act as a clog to their activities. How many have claims upon them of which others know nothing, and which make them appear parsimonious. 4. What a chain, too, is some forgiven sin. It hinders men from taking positions which others in ignorance would thrust upon them. Just such a sin barred David from building the Temple. There is a sense in which we should forget a man's past—in kindness; but there are times when we should remember it in love. It will thus account for much that is

unaccountable. **II. HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT THESE BONDS SHOULD BE REMEMBERED.** When a man is appointed to do some work in a public observatory, he is set to take some well-ascertained observations, that any deviation on his part from the average vision may be ascertained. And this deviation is called his "personal difference," and is allowed for. If forgotten it would make his work useless. Something like this should be done by Christians. Allowance should be made for each man's "personal difference." Our brother's chain should be remembered. 1. In justice to him. Otherwise we shall deem him less worthy than he is. 2. In justice to ourselves and to our faith. We cannot but believe more fully in the Saviour if we measure His influence, which we cannot do if we misjudge our brother. 3. In justice to the cause of Christ. So long as we forget our neighbour's chain we shall misunderstand him, and so be unable to co-operate with him in Christian work.

III. THERE IS A RIGHT AND A WRONG SIDE TO THIS MEMORY. 1. Remember your brother's chain and this will make you more charitable in your judgments. 2. Remember only your own and it will make you petulant and sensitive. 3. Forget your own chain, then, but never that of others. (*J. Ogle.*) *The limitations of life:—* We have all our bonds and feel fettered somehow. Continually we discover that the realization of our aspirations, or the attainment of our purposes, is marred by some chain, even as the penmanship of Paul was made angular and irregular by his bonds. Thus we are each carrying about with us a chain, of which, so long as we are working within its limits, we may be largely unconscious, but which brings us to a stand the moment we have gone to its farthest length. The business man is bound to his counting-house by a cord which neither his God nor his conscience will allow him to break. The invalid is held down to her couch, and her devoted nurse is kept continually at the bedside of the sick one by a cord, which is not the less real because it is invisible, or the less powerful because its strands consist of love. The mother, wherever she goes, feels tugging at her heart the silken string that ties her to the cradle. The poor man is hampered by his poverty, and the servant has his service of God in some sort conditioned and qualified by the duties which he owes to his earthly master. We may find a few things suggested which may reconcile us to our bonds.

I. THE APOSTLE'S BONDS WERE NO DISGRACE TO HIM. 1. His chain was the trophy of principle, and was more ornamental to him than the bracelets of our fashionable ladies are to them. He could not blame his own folly or wickedness for his present condition. It came to him when he was in the way of duty, and the consciousness of that was a support and solace to him all through. 2. But it is quite similar with our providential limitations. There is no disgrace in poverty or in sickness, provided only we have not brought it upon ourselves by our iniquity. The business man has no need to be ashamed of his attention to his counting-house. The mother cannot think that she is disgraced by the little ones that fill the nursery with their glee. And if there be anywhere on earth the human incarnation of that angel who ministered to our Lord in His anguish, it is to be found in the devoted nurse who tends the fevered sufferer. Let us not condemn ourselves if, because we are unavoidably called to the discharge of such duties, we cannot give ourselves to work in some department of Church activity. 3. But the tendency of much that is said nowadays is to make one dissatisfied with himself if he be not engaged in some ecclesiastical work. It is good to realize Wesley's idea, "all at work, and always at work." But I have known a gentle heart well-nigh broken because a minister as good as declared that those who did not engage in a certain kind of work, were unworthy to be called Christians. But that quiet one was every day doing a kind of service for Christ which required far more self-denial, and one which she could not have neglected without sin. But the service of suffering is as well pleasing to God as is that of working. Holiness comes out in suffering as well as in working. And so, provided we maintain holiness within the limits of our chain, it is no disgrace to us that we cannot go beyond them.

II. PAUL'S BONDS DID NOT PREVENT HIM FROM BEING USEFUL. 1. No doubt Paul was sometimes saddened by the thought that his long imprisonment had kept him from missionary work, and yet in the long run he became convinced that his chain had really advanced the cause of Christ (Phil. i. 12-13). (1) The soldier to whom he was chained was changed every four hours, so by embracing the opportunity of conversing with each of his guards Paul became instrumental in the conversion of many soldiers, and introduced the leaven of Christianity into the Roman army. "My bonds in Christ are manifest throughout the prætorian guard, and in all other places." He came into contact with the lowest and the highest of the people, and was blessed in the salvation not only of the runaway slave Onesimus,

but also of some of the inmates of Cæsar's household. (2) It was at this time that he wrote his letters to the Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon; and who may estimate the results these Epistles have produced and are producing. Thus Paul was laid aside from personal activity for a time, in order that, through these letters, he might work for all time. 2. There is much in all this to stimulate and encourage us. How much the business man might accomplish for the Lord, if he were only to do with those who are brought into contact with him what Paul did with his soldier guardians! And is there on this earth any sanctuary so blessed as the sick chamber, where the pulpit is a couch of suffering, and the preacher is a patient, loving, gentle one who tries to bear all for Christ? It may seem a great hardship to the mother that she is kept by family cares from taking a share in any departments of active benevolence. But wait until that bright-eyed boy has grown up to be a godly man, or it may be a useful minister, and then she will have the satisfaction of knowing that the influence of her training is telling through him upon thousands of hearts. We never lose in the long run, even in the matter of usefulness, by giving ourselves to the nearest work, and to which we seem bound by a chain we cannot and dare not break. Another person can do as well in a mission school, but who, save she, can be a mother to her children. In the day of final apocalypse few things will surprise us more than the benefits which have sprung from the labours of some humble Christian who thought that she was doing nothing. Courage, then! You may be fettered, but He whom you serve is not bound. III. PAUL'S BONDS DID NOT MAR HIS HAPPINESS. When he was in the prison of Philippi he "sang praises unto God," and we cannot but feel that he was speaking his own experience in his injunctions to that Church (Phil. iv. 4-8). Nor is this all. In the Epistles of his first imprisonment there is an elevation of thought and a glad-some spirit which we hardly discover in any other. In any case his chain had not bound his heart. In the days of superstition men wore charms about them under the belief that they would thereby ensure themselves against disease. But no mere external appliance can keep sorrow from the soul. We must have Christ within to charm misery away. He "giveth songs in the night." It is an easy thing to sing in the day of health and prosperity; but only Christ can make us sing in want and bondage. IV. PAUL'S BONDS DID NOT LESSEN HIS REWARD. Opportunity is the measure of responsibility. He who sat over against the treasury pronounced the noblest eulogy over her who had cast into it the smallest coin—because in estimating her merit He "remembered her bonds." He knew that her heart was larger than her means, and that she was lamenting all the time that she had not more to give. So He will give the same kindly consideration to the different providential hindrances with which we have to contend; and haply they, who through their lives have been regretting that they have done so little, may hear the unexpected encomium, "He hath done what he could," "He hath done more than they all." We are thoughtlessly apt to connect reward with activity; Christ has connected it with character, and that is indicated and strengthened by suffering and patience as well as work. Consciousness of limitation may make a man painfully conscious of the imperfections of the little he is able to do. "It is not all I once planned to do. It was in my heart to make it much better! Master! Remember my bonds!" And the appeal will not be made in vain, for the reply will come: "Well done! enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Bonds worn for Christ:*—We should not forget that we, too, are in some sort "the prisoners of the Lord Jesus Christ," and ought to wear our bonds patiently in remembrance of Him. I saw lately in a sketch of the philosopher Morse, a simple incident that may help here to illustrate my meaning. In his early painting days, Morse went into the studio of Benjamin West, with whom he was a special favourite. That great artist was then engaged upon his famous picture of Christ Rejected, and after carefully examining his visitor's hands, he said to him, "Let me tie you with this cord, and place you there while I paint in the hands of the Saviour." So he stood still until the work was done, bound, as it were, in the Saviour's stead. I can fancy that a strange thrill would pass through Morse's breast as he thought of being, in any lowliest manner, identified thus directly with the Lord. But that was only in a picture. In the sternly real life of every day, however, we are each in some way bound by a chain in the Redeemer's stead, as representing Him on earth; let us see to it, therefore, that we wear it as meekly and as bravely as He wore that wherewith for our sakes He was fastened to the lictor's stake. Thus again we come to that cross whereon for us the Saviour died, and find in it a motive strong enough to induce us to bear anything, or do anything. (*Ibid.*) *Bonds no hindrance to happiness:*—

As I was writing there broke upon my ears the song of a canary bird hanging in the room overhead. Its trilling notes were not a whit less joyous than those which I have often heard rained down from the infinite expanse of heaven by the little skylark of my native land. In spite of its cage that tiny warbler sings, and when its young mistress goes to speak to it, there is a flutter of joy in its wings, as with ruffled neck and chattering gladness it leaps to bid her welcome. So let us accept our bonds, whether of poverty, or weakness, or duty, as the bird accepts its cage. You may cage the bird, but you cannot cage its song. No more can you confine or restrain the joy of the heart which, accepting its condition, sees God in it and greets Him from it. To fret at our circumstances will not improve them; but it will make us worse ourselves. On the other hand, the way to get the most happiness out of life is to carry Christ continually in our hearts. (*Ibid.*)

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